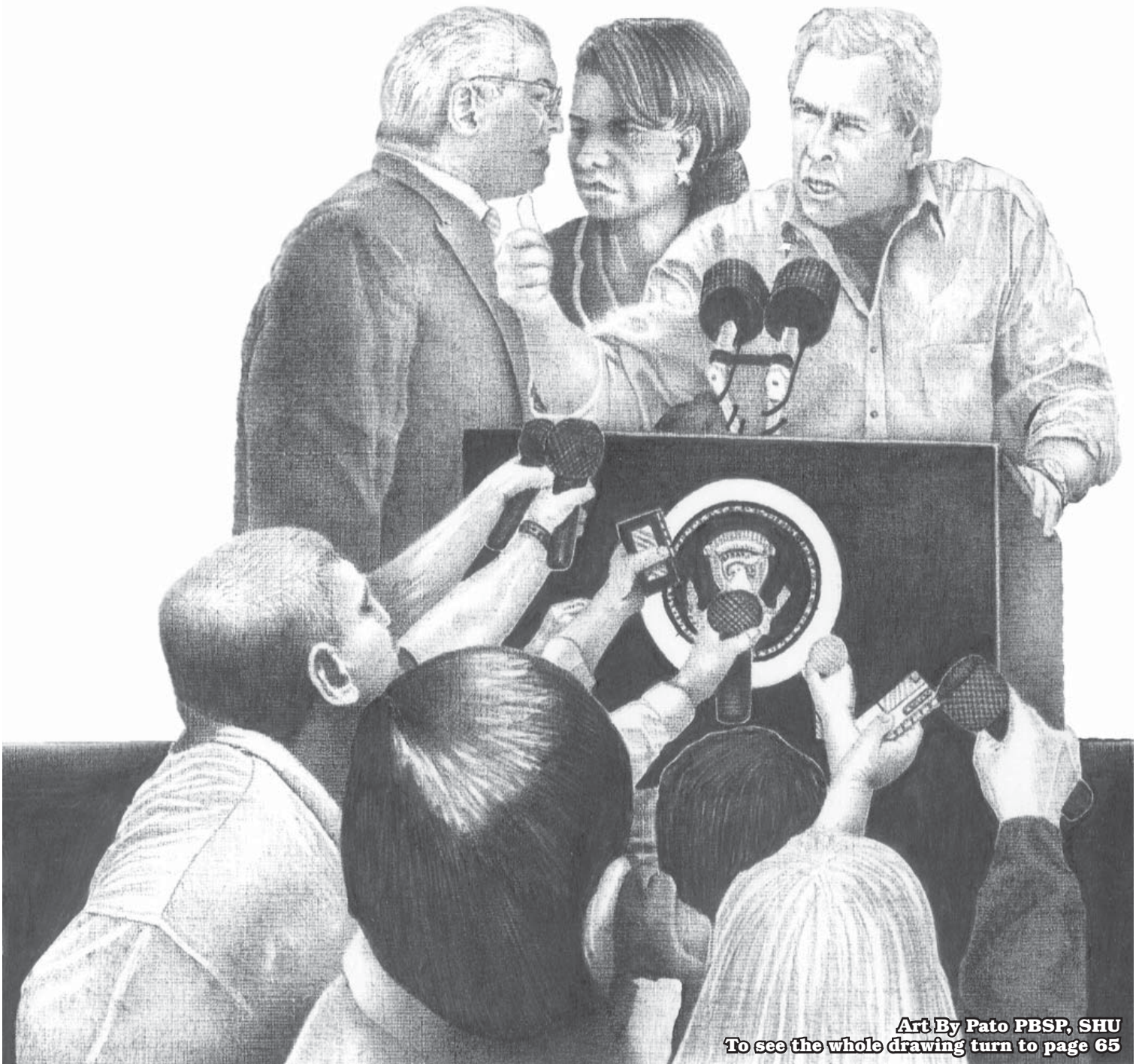


# ***The Beat Within***

*A Weekly Publication of Writing and Art from the Inside*



**Volume 9.27**



**Art By Pato PBSP, SHU**  
To see the whole drawing turn to page 65

**L**et's start this editorial note off by saying that The Beat Within has the honor of featuring on our cover one of our most powerful pieces of art in a very long time, perhaps ever? Well, we will let you be the judge of that, given we always have powerful pieces of art featured on the cover, be it Michael Orozco's, Jason Tréas's, Dat Nguyen's, and Jesse Provencio's to name a few. In any event, we think this piece has come at a defining time in our nation's history given that the Democratic and Republican Conventions are beginning and the presidential elections are soon to follow, and to top it off, the nation is still at war!

This drawing, completed solely with the filler of a Bic pen, speaks volumes about what this country has witnessed over the past few years President Bush has been in office. From the congressional vetoes of bills that would help poor families, to 9/11, down to the US military's abuse of prisoners at the Abu Ghraib Prison in Iraq and in Guantanamo Bay.

Along with Pato, our cover artist, we hope that this drawing provokes contemplation and discussion about world affairs and the United States' role in them.

Pato is a self-taught artist who has been in Pelican Bay SHU for what will soon be a decade. Anyone who understands what kind of conditions that entails (23 hours a day in your cell alone, going to a small concrete yard alone, no contact visits, telephone calls, etc.) would surely be as amazed as we are that someone so far removed from the free world could paint such an accurate picture of it.

With all this said, we want to send out a special thanks to Pato for sharing his talent and his perspective with us. Stay strong, Pato, we appreciate your knowledge and talent more than we might ever be able to prove to you.

Before we move on to another topic, we want to ask you young artists who feel compelled to sneak in your gang names, numbers, codes, etc., to do us a favor and leave your bullshh out of the art you submit. We understand the pride and loyalty you might have for the set, the gang, the block, but your selfishness might be what ends a good thing, meaning the closing of The Beat Within program. Sure, we have the capacity to clean up some of the art via computer, but we cannot catch everything that comes our way, and many times we simply take things out that we assume could be a problem, but probably doesn't mean a damn thing. Thanks for understanding.

Changing gears, slightly, the other day we had the privilege of meeting with a few key staff from one of the counties where we conduct our weekly workshops. While we were talking about our program, we proudly gave each person in the meeting our latest Beat. While the talking continued to move in what we hope was a positive direction, one staff person pulled out a pen and started marking up (and violating) the latest Beat publication when he saw what he thought was a violation of the juvenile hall's rules. Sensing there was a possible problem brewing, we kept our cool until we couldn't help but hear this person discussing and pointing out with authority to his neighboring colleague what he saw as flaws and violations by The Beat Within, which was allowing the young people in the Hall to write about their drug habits. As many of you know, this comes up pretty regularly, like almost every other piece. He questioned aloud (but don't quote us) why his juvenile hall would allow this kind of writing in the publication when they do not allow magazines and books that speak on and promote drugs?

Well, we think we truly handled the situation professionally, stating calmly, although eager to lash out in defense, "What do you want these young writers to write about when you ask writers to share their perspective, their thoughts, to teach from their experience?? They can only write about what they know! Sadly, most only know the 'hood, the game, drugs and violence, so that is what they write about, especially in their initial pieces. In time, once they begin to take themselves seriously as writers/teachers they can go beyond the drugs, violence, etc. Plus, we at The Beat never, never promote drug usage. If that's where the young person takes it and we publish their work, we always respond correctly with our From The Beat responses." After this, the individual was quiet and respectful. Since that meeting we haven't heard of any problems or concerns, but who knows what the week/tomorrow holds?

Now this is why we do have to censor particular pieces in The Beat, and why we recently stopped allowing you readers to say what's up to your friends in neighboring units and institutions. This only gives those who resist The Beat ammunition and opportunity to "hate."

It's already a challenge, to say the least, to allow you readers who live in these correctional institutions the opportunity to write and share with us readers what's on your minds, especially those in the adult system. It's a real drag for us to hear that these folks, who are against you BWO writers participating in the publication, believe that you are all about recruiting for your political cause. Well, if you are, you are either all doing a pretty damn good job and have pulled one past us, or are failing miserably, given how many people are still stuck in the system if not resting in peace . . .

To us, you BWO writers are some of the deepest writers

we've ever seen in any paper. The best writers and poets in America! No shhh! No one in America gives prisoners more of a voice than The Beat Within! Damn, every week we step up B-I-G to give all Beat readers, young and old, at least fifteen BWO voices to read, cherish, question and learn from. We think we do every single reader justice by giving him/her all these unique voices in The BWO, voices that otherwise would be silent, except for the occasional series from a mainstream publication. Then again, when was the last time you read a raw article from anyone in the adult system in these mainstream papers? Chickenshhh corporate media rarely, if ever, puts out such pieces/commentaries! Despite the crimes you allegedly committed, every single one of you has something very, very important to express. Yet, it's OK for the media and entertainment industry to write and portray gangsters in the community as glamorous, ruthless thugs, but in truth . . . well, we know each truth is unique to each special person, and that every single one of you are unique individuals with an important story to tell, to teach from, especially given how many men and women are incarcerated in America. Thank you, Beat writers.

So here we sit, putting the final touches on this issue. It's late Monday afternoon, and the sun is slowly disappearing into the clouds that are coming in from the Pacific Ocean. In time, San Francisco will be overcast and windy. This isn't surprising at all, this is our SF weather at its finest. Wait till late August, September and October, that's when it will warm up!

POW (Pieces of the Week). Well, well, well, let's give a big shoutout to Vongphachanh, Shomoe, Peanut, Luis, Lil' John, Imay and Big Samoa from the 150 Crew. Congrats to Diaer from Marin County, Jue from SF/YGC, and Joe from Natural Bridge in Virginia. Lastly, props to Devious and Lil' Mami Lathan from San Mateo County. These writers truly touched us with their written words. Congratulations POW winners!

Before we received the POW winners' pieces, let alone any standout or weekly writing pieces from our workshop participants, we discussed the following topics with our classes to foster group participation, to, hopefully, plant seeds, and to inspire folks with the topics themselves. The first topic reads: "Desperate — Lil' Johnny is 15 years old. His father left him at a young age and his mother is a heroin addict. He doesn't have much going for himself, no job, and lives in a messed up home in a bad community. He feels like he has nowhere to turn and no one to depend on. To make matters worse, he just found out his girl is pregnant. Lil' Johnny isn't old enough to have a job. He has to do something, yet he feel his choices are limited.

Can you relate to Lil' Johnny? Have you ever felt desperate? What situation were you in? What did you do when you felt desperate? Did you do something that was against your morals? Did you feel like there was no way out? What advice do you have for people who are desperate, or, are you feeling desperate right now?

Tell us about your desperate moments."

Our second topic, "Ghost of Cellies Past — Do you ever sit in your room and wonder who was in there before you? What they were like? How old was he/she when they first arrived in the Hall? What did they look like? What was their family life like, what city did they come from? What their crime was? What their dreams were? What their background was? What their fate was? What was his or her story?

Share with us; use your creativity. Tell us what was this person like."

Our last topic, "I wish I was . . ."

We need to wrap this editorial up, but before we pull the plug, let us remind you that our tenth editorial note writing contest will be extended an extra month, to August 31, 2004. So if you haven't written a piece, or if you want to contribute a second piece to the contest, step up and do so. We want to know what your all-time favorite movie is and why. Do you like love stories, horror, crime and punishment, or musicals? What was it about that movie you loved so much? Was it actually the movie or the story that lead up to, or revolved around, the movie? Top prize for this contest is a \$100 money order, followed by a \$50 money order for second, while third and fourth places will earn the writers \$25 each.

All right readers, enjoy this very powerful body of work, we think there is something for everybody in this one, from the love poems, on-topic writing, and life stories, to the raps, poems, reminiscences and pieces looking into the future. With that said, this issue goes out to you readers and writers who are determined to never see the inside of a jail cell again. One person who has done just that is our old friend, Russell (Jiver) Morse, who discovered his voice as a writer in the SF/YGC Beat program a number of years ago, and who, for the next month, will be on the East Coast covering the Democratic and Republican Convention as a Journalist for Pacific News Service. From incarcerated writer to professional writer, or whatever you want to be, it can be done.



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**The Beat Within**, a weekly newsletter of writing and art by incarcerated youth, is published by Pacific News Service.

At The Beat Within, we go through a lot of trouble to censor inappropriate sexual remarks, foul language, and gang references. There is enough tension in our communities already—we don't aim to bolster it. It is in The Beat's interest to promote peace and unity. Our goal is to educate one another.

The Beat Within publishes the opinions and views expressed by the participants in our workshops. This is simply the pure voice of the youth. The views you read do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher, editor or staff. All rights are reserved. Nothing from this publication can be reproduced without our written permission.

To our writers: What you write could be hazardous to you. Your words have consequences, and could be used to incriminate you. Try to illuminate your feelings and viewpoints without running the risk of providing ammunition for those who might use your words against you.

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Art: Much props to everyone for the great art this week.

Spiritual Advisor: Jack Jacqua

Book Donor: Marisela Norte

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**Writers:** Thanks to all the participants in our workshops in the San Francisco's Youth Guidance Center and Log Cabin Ranch School and the Walden House Facility, Maricopa County, Arizona, Walden House, San Mateo, Santa Clara, San Luis Obispo, Alameda County, Santa Cruz County and Marin County Juvenile Halls. As well as Natural Bridge in Virginia, and Hidden Truth in Rhode Island. If you have any questions or comments about The Beat Within, or if you would like to become a subscriber, contact us at: 275 Ninth St. SF.CA. 94103 or call (415) 503-4170 or check us out at

[www.thebeatwithin.org](http://www.thebeatwithin.org)

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## Counselor's Corner

**From The Beat:** One of our favorite counselors is back! Ms. Wadud, who not only touches lives in the girls unit in 150, is back to touch lives in The Beat, where this marvelous counselor/poet's work is read all over the country, from the young people in the school house to those in various correctional institutions. Her poetry and thoughts move and challenge our readers as she brings important soul to The Beat. Thank you Ms. Wadud!

### Be Thankful

Be thankful for your life.

Be thankful for the caring individuals in your life.

Be thankful for your eyesight.

Be thankful for your arms and legs and mind and heart.

We constantly complain about what we don't have.

But we take for granted the abundance of blessings that

God has given us.

There are people that are born blind...

You have eyes to see use them wisely.

Use them to see the good in others and the beauty of creation.

Many people have debilitating diseases and are born crippled or handicapped.

Many people are in accidents or some tragic mishap that leaves them paralyzed where they have to depend on some one to wash, dress and feed them.

Think on these things!!

So what, you're not rich!

So what, you ride the bus!

So what, you're not famous!

Think about the things you have.

Be thankful.

Thank God everyday!

Everyday!

Love you all.

**-Ms. Wadud, 150 Crew Counselor**

### Little Boy

Little boy grow up as you learn what it is to be a man  
It don't matter how big or how many hands  
Little boy grow up and realize where you went wrong  
Because killing does not make you strong  
Little boy grow up and think with your brain  
Because a head and a head to you adds up to be the same  
Little boy as you enter the world alone  
learn to fight with your mind and listen with eyes and ears  
'Cause sadly in this world no one seems to care  
Little boy grow up and learn to love yourself  
'Cause when you come to an end that's all you'll have left  
Little boy as I leave you with the little I can say off top  
Know that some where in the world  
Your pain is not forgot

-Imay, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Powerful piece, I may. You tell it like it is. Share those wise words. This speaks volumes to all of us out there, young and old. You're gonna be a good mama!



### Walls Or Pages

I don't imagine about who's been in the cells before I was. To tell the truth, I could give a damn, because reality is, I'm stuck in that cell right now!

But, almost every wall in a lock down facility tells a story. Almost everybody who's been in a cell, they write their set or name, and it kind of tells a story. Every wall is a page and every inmate, or detainee, is an author. The problem is the story only gets read if you're locked down. Most people don't understand the story and the problem is that story never ends.

There is no hope in other people to read or understand the story. The system thought they were going to use that against us, but it backfired. We changed a story from a negative to a positive. Police or congressman, or even the President, will never read the story or even know what we're talking about. This was the safe-proof plan from the system to control the story. The sad thing about it, most of the people who understand it, and practically know it by heart, are either dead, doing life, or if they're lucky, are on the outs. This story is not taught in schools, but it's the story of America.

-Big Samoa, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Big Samoa, man, you keepin' it real in this piece. The stories that these walls tell, nobody wants to hear. The reality is, we need to hear these stories. These are the cries of society's victims. Of course you don't give a damn. Why should you? What should we do with these stories? What do you think about your story? Will it ever be heard? By whom? We guess the real question is, how do we stop these stories from repeating over and over again, generation after generation?

### A girl is tellin' me she's pregnant When I'm stuck on a pipe

#### Thoughts

As I sit here  
Thinking 'bout the problems an' stress  
I create on myself  
The tears I cry  
Are bitter and warm  
A girl is tellin' me she's pregnant  
When I'm stuck on a pipe  
Can't keep a job  
But I don't know if it's even mine?  
This time ain't no joke  
I'm going to be here for a hot minute  
All I want is to be free  
Off probation  
Can't even think how good it will feel  
But life is a trip  
So I guess we need to  
Fight for our lives

-Dlaer, Marin

From The Beat: You're not on a pipe in Juvy right now. How are you managing without drugs? Can you stay without them when you get out? You can find out for sure if the girl's baby is also yours by taking a DNA test. What if it is? What are you prepared to do about it? We all have to fight for our lives. You can keep a job if it's worth it to you. If not, you'll blow it. What kind of job would you like? What are you willing to do to get it? To keep it?

Every wall  
is a page  
and every  
inmate, or  
detainee, is  
an author.

## To My Dead Mother

to my mother who died before i was  
born  
my mother whom i loved and still do love  
unconditionally  
who cursed me before i started to be  
who told me i was a failure  
but when i have money, i never fail her  
i am mijo's today, mistake from the beginning  
why act, just let me know  
that way we can go our separate ways  
and you end my messed-up days  
at least i'll respect you 'cause you told me  
but my only question remains  
why did you abandon me, what did i do  
did i curse you in the womb  
did i kick too hard, did i cry too much  
why do you lie to my face and say  
we will be together someday  
now it's too late i am a man  
i no longer need a mom  
plus i already had one, she was yours too  
grandma only raised one fool, and that's you  
all the knowledge you have obtained  
right down the drain  
tell me this  
why did you teach me your ways of deceit  
— crime  
and how did you do it in such a short time  
you tell people i am your son  
but when were you my mom  
my mom died before i was born  
at least on the inside of me  
the only mom i had was my grandma  
i don't know why i wanted you  
you treated me so cruel  
you made me hard on the inside  
and painless on the out  
so next time you see me, remember  
you died deep inside my heart and soul  
you turned my heart to coal

**-Shomoe, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** To feel betrayed by a parent, to feel played by a parent — especially your mother, hurts like no other thing this wide world can bring! To feel abandoned or cruelly used, guarantees your heart will be confused. Maybe you gave drugs and crime a trial run, not only to test ideas of what's right and wrong — but trying to comprehend what pulled your mother away from home. Even if demons are mere superstition, and demonic possession no more than a fiction, the disease of addiction and its self-centered destructive symptoms, fit the description so well — it can seem as if human beings walking the earth are denizens of hell, inflicting endless pain on both themselves and those they'd otherwise love so well. The addict can never be whole in body, mind and soul, till he or she is free from addiction's hold. And no one suffers like the addict's children. Even if they stay clean, they need to put in work for recovery — for they were born trying to please a mom and/or dad lost to the disease of addiction. Have you ever visited a meeting of Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACA)? They know.

can help: your god's name, or the name of a loved one, or a meaningful phrase; repeated until you begin to chill enough to figure out how to defuse the situation or disengage. Do you know the Serenity Prayer? "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference." Eventually, you'll separate pain from rage: the rage will disappear and the pain will change. Practice and remain vigilant for storm warnings. (And stay away from alcohol or other "recreational" drugs, period, no exception; they will render you too vulnerable. At first it's hard to learn to deal with emotions, clean — but you've already done it in the past, successfully for eighteen months.)

## That's Why I Believe In Ghosts

Sometimes I sit and wonder if this ghost in my room is still here and — will it harm me? If it is still in here, I hope it will just mind its own business.

I have seen a ghost once or twice in my life. Once, when my uncle passed away, I went to the temple to go bless him. I was still in the group home at the time.

I went to the temple with about eleven relatives, and we had all shaved our heads bald, our eyebrows also. And there was lots of gold in there, all over the place, and candies. Later on that night, we all went to sleep there on the raised stage with lots of burial urns below us.

When everybody else was sleeping, I was up, thinking. Then all of a sudden, this spirit pops up, dancing in an Asian style! She was pitch black, and I got a little scared. I woke up my cousin who was sleeping next to me, but when I looked again the spirit had disappeared.

I finally fell asleep, but we all woke up at around four a-m in the dark of the night and prayed for like two hours. While we were praying, I heard children running up and down the stairs — and I know they were spirits, too. I'm just glad they didn't bother me.

**-Vongphachanh, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** Do you believe that spirits ever return to bestow blessings and give advice? If the spirits of those who've been in that cell before you, could bless you with good advice — what do you think they would say to you? Knowing they came to bless you, would you follow their advice?

## Bad Trip

The only bad trips I have, are the ones deep in my soul. When I travel there, I remember everything that brought me pain in my life — and I experience it again.

The pain runs all through my body. When I venture into the depths of my mind and soul, I feel the travesties that have happened in my life all over again. I can feel and sense every second of pain.

These bad trips blow my mind to where I can't even remember where I am, and I travel deep into these holes to deal with the pain once again. And this happens over and over!

Sometimes when I am in these holes, I can't see, literally; and I do things I would never do. I become scared, and I just react! When this happens, I change. And every time it happens, it gets worse. I become more violent and crazed and scared and saddened.

I can't control it. That's what scares me. It happens faster than I can comprehend. The transformation is only momentary, but it causes drastic damage!

When people look at me, I'm a big oversized teddy-bear, but a bear nonetheless. The bear lies dormant, till the arousal of hate and anger — rage, pain. Then the bad trip begins. These are my bad trips in my soul and mind!

**-Shomoe, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** Bringing it out of the dark into the light of day, can rob it of power. For one thing, others who've been through similar moments of blind rage, can tell you about the various stages of triumph on the road to ultimate victory over this inner demon. It begins with recognizing the warning signs before you flash, or the familiar situations that make it seem inevitable — then cutting yourself out of the drama quick and early. It may mean giving up something you want, or it may mean feeling embarrassed or even humiliated for a few moments, but as you practice disengagement, your successes reduce your embarrassment. Each time you succeed, you grow in confidence. Similarly, when you do reach the flash point, you practice putting an instant, the tiniest space, between the impulse and the act — and in that instant you step back (whatever that means: in time, in space, both; physically, mentally, both). Sometimes a prayer or chant



## Always In My Heart

So pretty and cute  
But she never made it though  
She never did a crime in her life  
But now she in the Hall doin' time  
The men she thought she love  
Said she was his 'cause  
In the Hall  
With no one to call  
She screamin' and bangin'  
On the wall

She cry and cry  
I try to help but there's nothin'  
I could do  
I let her cry on me  
But that did not help

She tells me  
My man was goin' to get a murder  
charge  
I said "Don't do his time"

She said she loved him  
And she would never tell  
She loves him so much  
She came from court  
She told me she told

She leavin' me in three days  
On Monday

I'm in my thinkin'  
I gave her bad advice

The Sunday before she left  
I seen her mom  
She said "Thank you  
For giving her good advice"  
She said she would keep in touch  
And tell me what's happening

I'm alone in my room thinkin'  
'Bout her  
Waitin' to hear from her

Two weeks later I get a letter  
It said  
She doin' very good  
I was so happy of that

Another two weeks later I got a letter  
It was break on East Unit  
It had a broken heart on it  
It was not her writing  
I thought hard before I opened it  
I asked staff if I could go to my room  
And not school

I read the letter  
She got shot  
I started to cry and go as crazy as  
She was  
I should have never gave her advice

Just let her do some mad time  
At least she'll be alive

I don't know  
But I feel that I've been with her  
My whole life  
It feels like God took someone else  
From me  
Although I just met her

I'm go' end this with a letter

Dear Ponikwa,  
I'm sorry that I was not there when  
it all went down. I just want you to  
know I love you. So God please bless  
your soul.

You will always be in my heart.

Love always, Bnauna.

**-Lil' Mami Lathan, San Mateo**

**From The Beat:** We understand why you blame yourself, but it's not your fault she's dead. There are a million choices we make every single day, and any one of those can affect the course of the rest of our life in ways we can never know in advance. The sadness you feel is real, and her memory may always make your heart a little heavy. However, you have a chance to live on and take advantage of the chances she never had. We cry with you, because we can only guess at the pain you're feeling right now, but the pain will fade. How can you use her memory as a source of strength? How can you live to do all the things she will never be able to do?

**My broken  
and cold heart  
need some  
loving.**



## Feel My Pain

My broken and cold heart need some loving.  
Demolished from years of thugging and no loving.  
I tried to shed tears and show emotions but it gain nothing.  
Grew up as a bastard and followed a motto, "It's nothing."  
The whole time I wanted someone there who could dry my tears  
and say "Baby Son, I'm here"  
But there he left me in a puddle of tears.  
Me dying not knowing pops was my only fears.  
Forget the world and whoever in it.  
I'm bleeding out my heart, I know y'all can feel it.  
For all you cats out there with a moms and pops, you are gifted because  
when you out there on yo' own you be lucky if you have  
a roof over you' head or a pot to piss in.  
I wish I had moms or pops that I could say, "They was trippin'." Only  
people I had was people who taught me how to put the clip in and youngstas  
in stolos who told me to jump in  
and OGs who told me to look out for 5-0 while they brought the dope in  
My moms and pops coming into my life is what I'm hoping  
And if I ever have a kid I'll never leave his heart open  
to this world of drug dealing, smoking, or better yet thugging.

**-Devious, San Mateo**

**From The Beat:** This piece is almost too painful to read. No child should have to grow up without the love of one or more caring adults in their life, and it indicts our whole society that you, and others, have had to find your own way. While the law talks about "strikes," our society never talks about the strikes we lay on our children even before they make any choices for themselves. Your past can be like a weight around your neck pulling you down, but it can also be guidance for a future that is radically different. Now that you're nearly an adult, you will have a lot to say about which way your experience will take you. We're betting on a future in which your own child will be able to call you "Dad," and mean it.

## Why

I don't know why I do what I do. All I know is I do it. Sometimes I ask myself what was I thinking. I understand some of my actions, but others I do for no reason. It's like my mind isn't there. I tell people there's something wrong with my head, but everybody tells me there's nothing wrong with me. Maybe it's just from being locked up for a certain period of time. Their probably right there's nothing wrong with me. I worry about a lot of things, even small things I wouldn't worry about if I were back home.

Being locked up makes me think differently. Why does the state want youth locked up, why they have to be so harsh on young people. I'm young and that's one thing that wonders around in my mind. And people tell me that's one thing a 16 year old shouldn't worry about. State facilities are not helpful they make crimes happen.

My third facility I went to I learned how to steal cars faster and easier and it won't be hard to find someone to teach me. It's a good thing I changed my life around because if I didn't I would have probably got locked up again for stealing a car. All because I went to a state facility with criminals that don't care. Why integrate state criminals if you ask me all we need is a detention center.

Why do we think about all of this stuff? Because we have too much time over our heads to think about it.

-Joe, Virginia

*From The Beat: You give us your convictions straight up and down, Joe B., and that's an encouraging sign. You raise some good questions in the process. As to your personal musings, what can you do in the way of purposeful reading to learn more about the behavior of people and the workings of "our minds" generally? Does your counselor give you insights in these areas of "self-knowledge"? He or she should.*

## Doing Wrong

I think the definition of wrong is doing something uncalled for. Like for example if you already have what you need and you had to do wrong to achieve it but you still keep doing the wrong because you're used to it, or like what you're doing — that's wrong.

In general I believe it is wrong to rob, sell drugs, steal, rape, and murder! Many People do theses things or have done at least once and many people never got caught for it. People that have grown up around these things, I'm sure were exposed to them at a young age, so its in their minds that it's not something wrong, just that it is against the law and the punishments for getting caught for such things. Then naturally, a person's mind starts thinking of slicker ways, how not to get caught for they won't have to face the punishments set forth.

This is how we we're programmed to be without us even realizing it, then we grow older after all the years and say, "damn, how did I come up to end up this way," whether you're living a happy life, dead, or in prison. Just remember these things; "always try to make the right choices". And that "it is never too late." That's all I got, I'm out.

-Lil' John, 150 Crew

*From The Beat: That piece is hella tight and hella real. Did you get this wisdom before or after you came to Juvenile Hall? Have you ever done anything uncalled for? Did you check yourself for doing it? When is rape/murder ever called for? Do you always try to make the right choices?*

**Why does  
the state  
want youth  
locked up,  
why they  
have to be  
so harsh  
on young  
people**

## Bad Karma, Good Karma

I'm feelin' desperate, hopeless, and helpless. I'm stuck in this hell hole. I'm trapped in here stressin' off my girl and my life.

When I'm in my room sometimes I feel like I'm never going to get out and I panic. I've only been in here for about a month, but it's still hard for me. I'm not meant to live my life in here.

It's time to make a change and lead a positive lifestyle. When you do wrong, karma will get you and give you what you deserve. Life is full of choices and if you make a wrong decision, you're cheating yourself out of life's miracles.

I made a mistake coming here. I made the wrong decision, and now karma is making me pay for it. When I get out, my whole life will change. I'm going to be a positive influence on my friends and explain to them that the little money they're chasing right now is nothin' compared to planning for your future and makin' money the right way in the long run. The little money you come up on in the streets is soon going to be gone.

Planning ahead and working for the future will ensure you a steady paycheck. If you go to school and get a degree, you have something to show for yourself. Nobody can take that away from you. If you're hustlin', thinking you're makin' money, soon it will all be taken away from you. Stealin', sellin' drugs, robbin', comin' up, it all ain't right, and it's all going to come back to you in many different harsh ways.

The world is harsh, and if you don't play it right, you gonna get played. While you're in here, take advantage of your time and think about that little money you're riskin' your ass for. Ask yourself: Is it worth it?

-Jue B4, SF/YGC

*From The Beat: We agree with every word in this tight piece. Of course, knowing what to do is not the same thing as doing it. How will you translate your own advice and apply it to your life? What specific changes do you see yourself making when you're back on the outs? How did you come to see the world the way you see it now instead of the way you used to see it?*

### Use Your Time Wisely

What's up to everyone in the Hall. It's Peanut from Camp Sweeney, just doing my time. August twentieth is my release date, ya feel me! It's nothin' to a boss.

I'm'a tell y'all something I learned while being in the Hall for two months, and at Camp for five. In the Hall, I had a lot of time to think about my mistakes and problems — it's in the Hall where you think and realize you done wrong.

While I was in the Hall in D-unit, I had a lot of time, so I had to keep myself occupied in a good way. I started off by keeping a low profile of myself and staying out of trouble. Then when staff noticed me, they made me a worker, and I was almost never in my room. I only went in my room when shift changed, and at "last head call" sometimes even late.

I worked my way, showing the staff that I was coo'. Once I got coo' with all the staffs, they always brought me out to watch TV or play ball, while the rest were in their rooms. Be coo' to staff, and staff will be coo' to you.

Out of the two months in the Hall, I was on "top citizen" for the longest; I never got kicked off. I don't see how all these young men can get in so much trouble. All you have to do, is follow directions.

Being in the Hall, I used my time wisely. I got to think of my mistakes, make up some school credits, and I even made some friends.

Now, Camp — there is so many things you can do in Camp that will help you in life. A lot of young men think Camp is a place where we just do our time, but it's not. If you stop and think, and use your time wisely in Camp, like what I'm doing, you'll be out of Camp in no time.

A way to use your time wisely is, while you're at Camp get your GED. I take my test this month, and I know I'm'a pass it. Another thing you can do, is join programs.

Right now I'm in a program called Youth Radio, where a group of us go down to Berkeley and host a radio show live for three hours. I mean, where else can you find a Camp that has a program like that? I been on air twice, live, just doing my thang: playin' music and just giving shout-outs; and, plus, it's a great experience.

I'm also in a program called Cornerstone. It's a class on architecture. They teach us how to landscape and how to design models of houses, buildings, and whatever you want to build. I'm getting a lot of benefits out of this program, because when I graduate from this class in August, I get a certificate. And they will also find me a job in construction.

That's why I'm telling all of y'all now — don't waste your time, do something positive with it. Another thing good to do when you're at Camp, is don't get any dirty pee-tests. If you go two months with no dirties, you'll be put on student council, like me.

And once you're on student council, it's a wrap. You get to go home Friday and come back Monday morning, and you get to go home in the middle of the week, on Wednesday, too. So, basically, you'll only be at Camp three out of seven days.

There are a lot of things to do at Camp. If you wanna get buff, just go to the weight room. If you like playing sports, join a team, like me.

Right now, it's baseball season, and today we had a game against Byron Boys' Ranch. We played two games; the first game we won, and the second, we lost. Byron is our rival team. They are the best in the league right now, but we didn't give up. We played hard, and we beat them the first game. That shows that we were dedicated and that we stayed focused.

Well, this is Peanut, in Camp. Don't forget to use your time wisely in the Hall, and even at Camp. I have, and since I have, a lot of doors opened. Now I have a lot of choices that I can pick. I can get a job I construction; I can go to college; I even got The Beat Within wanting to hire me.

I don't know if y'all will listen to me, but I hope y'all do. Because it's time for us to set our lives straight and stop doing the bad and start doing the good. All right then y'all, I'm out. Y'all keep y'all heads up there in the Hall, and use y'all time wisely.

**-Peanut, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Over these past seven months, we have watched you grow as a writer and as a person. And this piece is yet another jewel in the crown of a prince of positivity! You have taken a negative, getting caught up and locked up, and transformed it into a positive — step by step, day by day, and week by week. And you've reaped rewards as you've progressed from the starting block of staying out of trouble in the Hall, to full engagement in the various activities and opportunities that have come your way at Camp. If we might use a sport analogy, you remind us of Lance Armstrong in the Tour de France, as he steadily continues his race over mountains and across valleys, setting the pace while his strongest competitors follow in his track, and the weakest, break and fall back, or just quit. As heartbreaking as it is to see them fail, it is inspiring to watch Lance — and every week in The Beat, to watch you — triumph by triumph, move closer to the prize. We see in you, the same focus, determination and ability, that makes a man into a champion, as you race steadily toward your own personal finish line — finished with crime, finished with doing time! Prepared, inside and out, to live responsibly and free, successfully meeting the challenges of everyday life, till the whole world comes to see — you got it right!*

### No Visits For a Month

I've been in this place for like a month, and in all the time I've been in here — I have had no visits from my family. And every time visiting hours came, I waited expectantly because my family told me they were coming.

So I'd wait and wait, but they never came. Weeks passed by, and still no visit! And also, every time visiting hours came, I would see my roommate get visits with his family. When he would leave the room, I would wait to be called to visiting — but nothing happened, no one came.

So every time after visiting ended, I would see my roommate come back — and I would feel like shhh! Like I was worth nothing! And many times I would cry quietly to myself, feeling worthless. But I would pray to God to help me be strong and stay focused. That would help me go to sleep.

And I still waited every time for a visit, and every time till just last week — no visit! So this last time, expecting no visit, I just went to sleep. And I got woken up by staff!

Staff said, "You got a visit." So it felt good! But I know not to expect a visit every visiting day. Rest in peace: Maria Rodriguez Tinoco.

**-Luis, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Maybe your story here will help the next person deal with the pain of waiting for visits that never seem to come. Your story teaches: (1) pray for the strength to stay focused, and (2) never give up hope. Thanks for sharing from the heart.*



## What Happened To Your Love For Me?

We used to sit under the stars together  
Holdin' one another and I used to name them out for you  
Naming every constellation I know, Gemini all the way through  
You used to tell me I was a romance  
Do you still think you can give me a chance?  
To prove to you again you own my heart  
And to tell you when you left me you tore it apart  
I love you always and forever  
But now I can't tell you because I can see you — never  
Regardless of what we been through  
You never even gave me an explanation  
When you were mad at the BART station  
On the first night I met you  
Under the stars that first night I kissed you  
Our relationship started  
And you told me you'd die if we parted  
What happened to that?  
We use to play together and you said, "You're a cat"  
That's the night you told me you wanted to have my kid  
And never break up with me but you did  
What am I to do now?  
When I think about living I yell out "How!"  
But suicide ain't the way  
I am here to stay

-Shadow, 150 Crew

**From The Beat:** Relationships are hella hard to maintain. Sometimes they can drive you insane. But remember, there is always something to learn, from every relationship that tends to burn. You always have yourself and if you love yourself unconditionally — then you will only settle for the best eternally.



## Wishing I Was...

I wish I was a preacher, a teacher, a mom, a lover, a daughter, a doctor, a policeman, a judge, a counselor, a helper, a maid, a minister, a friend, a role model, but now all I could be is me.

I'm glad, but wish to seek one day, someone else I'll be. Someone great, someone to help those who have less faith.

-Damia, 150 Crew

**From The Beat:** You have the potential to be all those things. Be yourself, follow your dreams, your wishes, and your goals. As long as you stay focused on those things important to you, you can accomplish anything. Love the piece!

**I'm glad, but wish to seek one day, someone else I'll be. Someone great, someone to help those who have less faith.**

## First Times

Our first time  
Are the ones that I remember the most...  
The first time we met  
The first time we talked  
The first time you called  
And we went out  
The first time that we were separated  
And I told you I'd miss you  
The first time I cried when you were gone  
The first time you told me that you loved me  
The first time I said, "I love you"  
And the time that we first loved  
The first time I met your family and friends  
The first time that you met mine  
And the first time I knew that our love was going to last...  
Between us there have been many first times  
And everyone...  
But the time that I remember the most often...  
Is the first time I fell in love...  
With you

-Lil' Shawn, 150 Crew

**From The Beat:** When you reminisce on the good times with your love, do you feel that she was an angel sent from above? Do you think about her every day? How did you use to make her feel special in every way? Are you missing her like crazy? What would you do right now if you could see your baby?

## **Fight To The Death**

It's a fight to the death,  
If I have to fight to be free.  
I'll fight, fight, fight,  
To be all I can be.  
I'll fight till I'm tired,  
I'll fight till you see  
That this Young brotha  
Was destin' to be free.  
I can fight fight, fight,  
Fight until I'm blue in the face.  
But will the fight that I'm fighting  
Ever take me from this place?  
I'm fighting for my freedom,  
But the more I fight, it goes away.  
I thought freedom meant being rich,  
And doing things my own way.  
I said I'll fight to the death,  
But after death what then?  
If I'm going to fight to death,  
Might as well have had a chance to win.

The fight has a chance

It's still a fight to death,  
But don't change what I was fighting for.  
I'm still fighting for freedom,  
But I've learned that freedom means much more.  
Freedom in the mind,  
It's built from within.  
Read, write, get to know myself,  
Learn to be my own friend.  
The new fight that I'm fightin',  
Freedom's there, I can see it.  
I'll fight to the death,  
You better believe it.

**-Deep Speech B4, SF/YGC**

*From The Beat: We were very sorry to see you back in the Hall, Deep Speech, even though we love having you in our workshop because we've missed your deep speech... How did you come to see that freedom is more than just the absence of bars and walls? Are you getting to know yourself? Do you like what you see?*

## **What Is The American Dream?**

Like many people say, in my lifetime I've seen people come and go. Some of those people have either died or went to jail. Little kids look up to them like they're gods. They don't realize all of the hard times they went through. Some have killed or been killed for what they believe.

In the US we have many choices. We can be the President or a pimp. We can ball more than Donald Trump or live on the street and sell our body for a hit. It all depends on the individual to be what they want to be. But then again it's easier to get rich slangin' then it would be to get a job.

Some of us have been through what Lil' Johnny's experienced and do what we can to get money. We'll do what our predecessors have done and get a gun and go jack someone to go feed our offspring. This is what the authorities don't understand, because instead of giving us a year for every gram we have they should help us make money the legit way. But instead, they would rather waste money keeping us in.

So what is the American dream? Nothing but a damn wolf ticket, a promise we have achieve alone cause the government is too busy making their own money.

**-Vamp, San Mateo**

*From The Beat: There's an undeniable, and sad, truth to the way you see things. It is true, and sad, that little kids look up to those who go to jail or die. It is true, and sad, that it's often easier to get rich slangin' than it is to make money in a legit job. And it's true, and sad, that the authorities often don't seem interested in looking at the root causes of the crimes plaguing their communities or in helping those who have committed the crimes return to society in a positive way. That's where you come in. It is possible to do it another way, to save money slowly by working a legit job instead of stackin' it slangin', and those same little kids need a different type of role model to look up to. Who better to be that role model than you, someone who's been through the system and can come out the other end with a different message, a different way of seeking success.*

**I wish I was a million miles away  
so I wouldn't feel the pain  
I feel today**

## **A Million Miles Away**

I wish I was a million miles away  
So I wouldn't have to face the things I have to face today.  
I keep tellin' myself ta hold on  
and release aggression by gettin' my swole on  
But it's hard when I'm constantly worrying about my mama.  
I keep thinking on ways that I can hurry and bury this drama.  
I wish I was a million miles away  
so I wouldn't feel the pain I feel today  
'cause the pain I feel today is the pain I feel won't go away  
I wish I had one wish so I could wish for a million wishes  
but what good is a wish when life don't switch  
and we all finna end up in ditches

**-Young Kc, San Mateo**

*From The Beat: We're sorry we had to change up that last line a little, because this is a fine poem. That wish to be a million miles away can be a powerful motivator for you to do things differently when you get out of here. Even a million-mile trip begins with a single step, so we hope you have a clear idea of just what your first step will be when you get out. When you take that first successful step, you'll find that steps number 2 and 3 will be that much easier. Yes, we're all going to end up in ditches, but how we get there matters.*



## It's Dangerous When ...

it's dangerous when my mind drifts deep into my past  
because i lose contact with reality and relive moments in my past  
so i try and fix them any way possible  
i always resort to violence  
but i always do this on the wrong person  
the person who hurt me is long gone away from me  
but a certain touch or sound or feeling sets me off  
back into the past and i lose grasp of my reality  
murderous rage wells up inside of me  
and i react as if it were the person who hurt me  
sometimes i can stop myself  
but most times someone gets hurt  
when this happens to me i go blank  
i close my eyes and my ears  
and have intentions only of inflicting pain  
my body's strength more than triples  
and my mind shuts down and i regress to savage  
techniques to render my victim dead  
i usually stop before i go too far my mind finally realizes  
it's not them and remembers when and where i'm at  
and i begin to normalize with my body trembling  
mind trying to grasp reality as i resume life i feel bad  
my stomach turned my body weak my mind unfocused  
not quite comprehending what happened  
not able to remember what happened  
just knowing i did something with a scared body/mind  
when this happens i am like a cat trapped in a corner  
feeling my only way out is to fight so that's what i do  
this act is not just dangerous to the ones around me  
but mostly to myself and that's why  
it's dangerous when i drift deep into my past

-Shomoe, 150 Crew

**From The Beat:** Misplaced in time and space as it is, this instinct to fight for your life, which might have saved your life at some point in your past — endangers your life and freedom today. Your poetic description is vivid and visceral, a powerful verbal representation of the animal fight-or-flight physiology in us all. Yet, we cannot help but believe there is also a therapeutic effect in your giving articulate form to what you now see clearly as a dysfunctional and self-destructive behavior. Perhaps as you continue to explore in your writings, these psychological states, you can better identify your "triggers" — for the more conscious we become of what sets off such feelings, the better we are able to disconnect from such "automatic" responses, before we've done harm to ourselves and others. Your heart will still race (especially at first), your stomach turn, your head spin — but you will begin to build new habits of recognition and new patterns of response. You know, any time we see anything, for that thing even to take shape in our minds, we depend on our memory of the past — so as we reshape our understandings, we reshape not only how we feel and act, but also how we see (interpret) the world around us. Your mental/emotional reshaping is well on its way, as your writing powerfully testifies again today.

**I often think of  
having a child,  
but I know better  
than to add more  
wood to my fire  
at this point in  
my life.**

having your face and your hair and other bodily features, must feel so amazing.

I often think of having a child, but I know better than to add more wood to my fire at this point in my life. I can wait to have a mini-Moe. This is a fire that I think needs to just burn for now.

Yet later, in several years, I do want kids. I want as many kids as I can take care of! I want to have boys. That's all I want, but I know I'll probably have a girl — or even all girls!

But my wish is to be a father, not just a dad. And that's what I am gonna be — a father.

-Shomoe, 150 Crew

**From The Beat:** Sadly, you never got to experience a father's love when you were a child. Happily, you can experience it as a loving father to your own children. You are wise, however, to recognize that you have much work to do on yourself (especially since you had no father to teach you how to be a (good) man) before you have children of your own. Hopefully, you'll get your chance to practice being a loving and responsible husband, first.

## What Are We

## Accomplishing?

What are we accomplishing? What do you really want in life? I know what I want. I want freedom — another chance at life.

I've been institutionalized for almost nine months. I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired. These court-ordered programs are bullshit. All I want is to walk out these doors a free man! I want a legit job, girlfriend, good partners, and most importantly, my family — I'm so homesick!

I feel for all the brothers going through this County drama. Hang in there! Don't let anyone hold you back or tell you that you're worthless. We're all equal in the eyes of the Lord. What doesn't kill you, will only make you a stronger individual.

Just look at your situation and see it as a bad chapter in life, 'cause it'll pass eventually. Nothing is ever promised in life — except jail, if you're living the wrong way.

Just work and live free! What is it you really want in life? What are you accomplishing?

-Bizzy, 150 Crew

**From The Beat:** You can turn a negative situation into positive motivation by how you allow it to affect your thinking; how you choose to respond to it. Your piece is all positive, 'cause you turn your pain to gain. Naturally, you want to go free, but you realize how important it is to do what's necessary to stay free — and you list as number one: getting your money legitimately with a j-o-b. Let the pain pass but make the lesson last.

## I Wish I Was a Father

I wish I was a father; I don't mean just a dad. For my whole life, I think that this is the only goal that has always been a wish of mine.

The reason I want to be a father, is because I had no father; and it feels good when you take care of someone, show love to them — and they show back the same love! Just to hold someone with your blood flowing through their veins,



**A Soldier's Life, My Life**

we move as one  
we strike as one  
we group as one army  
united we stand  
unorganized we fall by the waste line  
never leave a soldier behind  
storm troopers straight off the front line  
each side with unity is unstoppable  
a soldier's strong mind is his secret weapon  
so to any limits i'm steppin'  
to slip is a mistake  
to grow and learn from  
to come together as one  
moving with grace  
until we stop wasting our time  
forever stuck in this place  
every once in a while there are casualties  
the good times the bad times  
in this struggle for victory  
at war like stuck in a desert storm  
attacking with the power of a killer-bee swarm  
sworn to death before dishonor  
trial is held in the streets your honor  
so if you got beef let's eat  
lyrics with so much heat  
that they leave you sweating in your seat  
for it is said that ones who are deceased  
are the only ones who' seen the end of the war  
so what i search for is to understand  
what i wish for is victory  
so with all this said now  
who will take a soldier's vow

**-Ben, 150 Crew**  
From The Beat: The romance of warfare provides a young man hiding from what's really there; enlisted in an army of self-destruction, he polishes his gun without compunction. It's all vanity, to sacrifice your humanity and pose like those so-called heroes that would rather die on the front than live day to day for home and loved ones. Satan's army command is housed in hell, while yours in a prison dwells — and both are enemies to families struggling to survive and more, to rise above perpetual war and raise children in peace, teach them what they need to live healthy and free. Soldier fathers in perpetual war, don't even understand what a father is for. But a soldier for peace is something to be — from the nursery to the workplace, courage shines on a real man's face. Now take that vow if you want to rise above the hating crowd that will sacrifice all for a shrill war call, for a place to hide wounded pride.

**Desperate**

Desperate to feel loved  
longing to be free of hate  
I loathe all people around me  
no one can relate.  
Afraid of moving on  
scared of letting go  
I put up a front  
so my true feeling you will never know.  
Desperate to have knowledge  
constantly struggling  
wondering if I'll even make it to college.  
Feeling desperate  
always lost and alone  
missing my baby  
I can't even talk to him on the phone.  
Some say I've matured  
some say I've grown  
but all my emotions, grief, and strife  
shall forever remain unknown.  
Desperate not to feel  
I can't even cry anymore  
I wish this wasn't real.  
Desperate times  
call for desperate measures  
making hella money  
but missing out on life's treasures.  
Some say I'm a "ho"  
but that comes to show  
whet people try to speak on  
they don't really know.  
Desperate always  
just need a helping hand  
help me rise up  
instead of letting me sink in the sand.

**-Friskie, San Mateo**

From The Beat: The desperation you feel flows from your soul to the pencil to the page, and the result is a piece that we know comes straight from the heart. You say that you have emotions that will forever remain unknown, yet you spill them bravely for us to read in this piece. Perhaps, along with the other hands that you need to help support you, the pencil will also help you rise up by giving you access to emotion and strength that even you didn't know you possessed. What are life's treasures? How can you find them, and when you do, how will you nurture them so that they, in turn, help you to shine as well?

**I wish I  
was a lot of  
things that  
I'm not**

**Kiss Me**

I wish I was rich so I could buy my way out of this shhh  
I wish I was big so I could stand tall through it all.  
I wish I was smart so I could have been good from the start.  
I wish I was nice so I wouldn't have got into so many fights.  
I wish I was cool so I wouldn't have had to steal to look good in school.  
I wish I was a lot of things that I'm not  
But I am who I am and I'm proud of it too  
So if you don't like me you can kiss my shoe!

**-Little Pat, San Mateo**

From The Beat: We love this little poem, Little Pat (even if we did have to change one word...) We wish you were rich and big, too, but we think you're already smart, nice, cool — and a lot of things you think you're not. And, since we have no intention of kissing your shoe or anything else, we like you!

## As I Enter My Cell

soon as i stepped in put my things down  
i started to look around at the taggings  
it made me think of the same taggings in my hometown  
could it be the same homeboys i met on the street  
i would see the same gangs tagged in the street  
so maybe he was old as me because it was a juvenile hall  
he was probably a hispanic like me  
probably had a sister and a brother like me  
he probably had the same charges or not  
but he was probably catholic like me  
all in all he was no more different than me  
the same dreams as me or not but  
all in all he was in the same situation  
i am about to enter

**-Alejandro, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Terrific poem! Now can you imagine him staying strong, but refusing to go along down the same track that had the rest of his pack headed back to incarceration again and again till they ended up banging in the pen' — then isolated in a SHU (security housing unit) with nothing to do at all but think back on how it could have all been so different after that stay in the Hall.*

## Hunger

I am hungry  
like a mutt on the streets searchin' for food  
except my food is happiness  
and I am starving.  
Cocaine is my Prozac  
I take a five-gram line twice a day  
it's not doctor proscribed  
it ain't over the counter  
it's on the streets  
where I belong.  
I don't know much  
I know what I need to survive  
survive on the streets  
where I belong.  
I want to stop  
get the cocaine out of my veins  
get off the streets where I belong  
I'm finding out where I truly belong  
I may never know but that's okay  
I may never know  
where I belong.

**-Smokey, San Mateo**

*From The Beat: Smokey, your writing is dark and powerful, and it's difficult to know how to begin to respond to this. You know the challenges you face, and that the addiction you shoulder is going to grind you down. You know you need to get clean, but the sense of belonging to your addiction is powerful. What is the first step you need to take towards finding your place of belonging? The search for a place in which you belong can be long (it takes most of us a lifetime, and at the end we're still not done searching) and it can feel like you're making no progress. Drugs can seem to point in the right direction, but most often they lead you further from yourself than you were beforehand. Is there anyone to whom you can look for help? Maybe this time in the Hall can give you a bit of time when you're able to be clean and off the streets, enabling you to start the process of finding yourself once again.*

## Time In The Hall: My Desperate Time

I mess wit' girls wit' kids  
and I still was a stepchild  
Locked up for four months  
without a sign of a fair trial  
Meaning I can't go to the bathroom  
without risin' my hand now  
My grandma cry  
comin' to jail, seein' her grandchild  
Two months before my eighteenth  
I guess I'm considered a man now  
So no more petty crimes,  
county wantin' my head now  
So now I walk in court  
pants saggin', my head down  
Whether I like it or not  
I'm nothin' but jail bound

**-Reggie, San Mateo**

*From The Beat: Man, this is one powerful — and powerfully depressing — piece. There are some profound lines in here — the one about how you guess you're considered a man now, knowing that age doesn't make manhood; the simple scene of seeing your grandma coming to see her boy in jail; the description of still being a stepchild despite all the girls. Yet the most troubling scene is in the last few lines — we've seen so many who have walked into the courtroom head down, already feeling defeated, and rarely have this led to anything good. What will it take to sit, and stand, in court with your head high, not proud of whatever missteps you've taken, but proud in the knowledge that you hold within you the key to walk a different path?*

**I don't know much  
I know what I need  
to survive  
survive on the streets  
where I belong.**

## Where My Father Figure?

What's good Beat? This Big Samoa from max.

Shhh, I ain't got a father figure. At least I know who my real pops is but that don't change nothing. My pop was never around when I was little, but lately that ninja be tryin' to come around lately.

It's a little late, but I give him a lil' credit for tryin'. At first, on my birthday I wouldn't trip that I didn't get a gift from my pops because I didn't have a clue about him. Then as time passed and I got older I thought damn, what's up?! I ain't leavin' for father-son workday or playing catch, shootin' hoops, and all that other bull shhh.

Now though, I don't give a damn, because really it ain't his fault because he just doesn't know how to be a dad. Sometimes he tries, for example, if I'm home alone watchin' my lil' niece and nephew he would buy us McDonalds and then bounce.

We don't have conversations except if he be drinkin' a lil'. I ain't trippin' though, most poor kids ain't got fathers anyways, but I know when I got lil' ones they gonna know they daddy.

To all lockdown or out be safe and watch out for the police. Gone.

**-Big Samoa, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Do you think that your life would have been different if you had a father in your life? Do you ever feel like asking him why he didn't take care of his responsibilities? What do you think the answer would be? Has the lack of a father figure in your life made you stronger or weaker? We're glad that you plan on being there for your kids in the future — maybe the lack of a father in your life has taught you to be a responsible young man.*

## Where Drugs And Drinking Get You

This is just a little piece about me . . .  
When my mom was pregnant with me she did cocaine.  
When I was born I showed symptoms of withdrawal.  
I was given up for adoption because of that.  
I have no clue who my mom or dad are.  
I don't know if my mom was a prostitute and my dad was just a trick.  
I could have been a mistake.  
But now, to this day, I have made the mistake.  
The people who adopted me loved me  
But I guess I didn't show as much love.  
I ran.  
I was on the run for five days (when I was a young teen).  
In those five days it was the first time I ever smoked weed or drank.  
I even seen a girl shoot up with tar and smoke coke.  
I came home, then about one week later I left for the night.  
I came back home the next night — I wanted to leave so I could see them and also smoke and drink.  
I got locked up for battery and vandalism.  
Ever since then I have been in group homes.  
I ran from my last group home.  
I stayed on the run for six weeks and one day.  
I smoked weed, drank, had sex with people I barely knew and tried crystal.  
They were gang members; they sold weed, crystal, and cocaine.  
They offered them all to me.  
I only smoked weed and crystal.  
I decided I will never do coke just 'cause it's in my blood 'cause of my mom.  
Later on, well . . . now I am going to my last and final group home. This is my last chance. If I mess up I will go to CYA for six months. All of you who think you have it bad, re-think that!

**-Nelly, San Mateo**

**From The Beat:** This piece is devastating. What makes it even harder to read is that it's true. One of the things that strikes us is that despite your love for the streets and some drugs, you draw the line at coke because of your mother's history. In that decision we see the strength and knowledge to begin to slowly draw the line at other drugs as well. Having said that, we wonder if you're getting any help. Are you being sent to a group home that has experience with kids with drug cravings? Are you getting any help — other than being locked up away from the drugs you want — while you're in the Hall? Get at your PO, get at your counselors and teachers in the Hall, and let them know you need drug programs and other programs that will help you with your history.

**Now I am the Shadow  
but the Light is still  
inside me.  
It is patient  
it is eternal  
it watches and waits  
for a chance.**

## The Shadow Is Not Eternal

(Part 1)

I walk in the light  
but the Shadow grows inside me  
grows and shifts and changes.  
Still I resist the shadow  
the Shadow that seeks to consume me.

It is intelligent, my shadow  
It knows of my desires.  
It tempts me with a promise,  
"Happiness comes with the Shadow."  
I embrace the Shadow.

I walk in the Shadow.  
No . . . I am the Shadow.

(Part 2)

Now I am the Shadow.  
Now I am invincible.  
Now I am safe from the Shadows  
the Shadows that rip and slash and tear  
the Shadows that seek to destroy me.

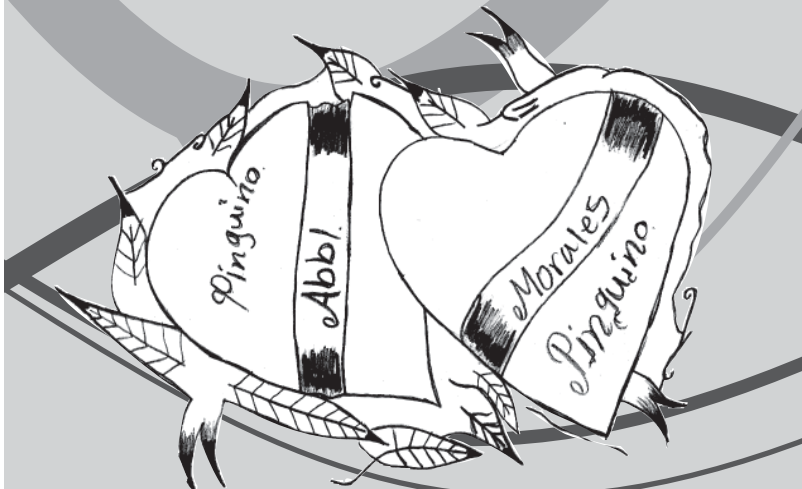
Now I am the Shadow  
but the Light is still inside me.  
It is patient  
it is eternal  
it watches and waits for a chance.

The Shadow has made a mistake.  
Now close lights are drawn to it  
empowering the Light from within.  
The Shadow shrinks, while the Light grows.  
The Shadow is consumed by the Light.

Now I am the Light  
and the Light destroys all Shadow.

**-LC, San Mateo**

**From The Beat:** This story has echoes throughout history in tales of temptation and redemption. However, while your story makes this sound as if it's a one-time epic battle that's been resolved, the reality is that this battle between light and dark goes on every day in a million small ways. How can you continue to seek out the light, even when the shadows try to pull you back? How can you distinguish shadow from light if the situation doesn't seem to be all that clear? How will you shine your light so that others see you as a beacon that they can follow through their own difficult times?





## If I Could Change One Thing

If I could change one thing in my life  
 I would've shown more respect to my mom  
 Because through out the years she kept calm  
 While I ran around on the streets with my "wife."  
 I was AWOL and she wouldn't let me stay the night  
 But she always let me change my socks and eat just right  
 She was always scared and worried  
 When she didn't hear from me for months  
 I was runnin' around doin' drugs  
 When I should of been givin' her hugs  
 We use to yell at one another  
 because I didn't wanna do something  
 Eventually I call her out her name like nothing  
 And I truly regret if — after I went insane  
 But when I got locked up,  
 Guess who came when I called her to visit me?  
 My mom! I love you mom.

-Shadow, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Yupp, that's right there is a mother's love! How do you show appreciation to your mother today? How can you let her know that you love her? Why don't you send her a copy of this poem? We're sure that would light up her heart under these difficult circumstances.



## The Ghost of The Room

ay who's there  
 — is it you  
 the ghost of the room  
 do you know me  
 were you one of my potnas  
 or were you my enemy  
 did you write on my wall  
 did you use the phone  
 ay wait —  
 did you just say  
 something to me  
 i thought i just heard  
 you — where is  
 that voice coming from  
 did you know my main  
 did you play  
 these county games  
 how long ago  
 were you here  
 did you have any fear  
 ah stop talking to me  
 first your voice  
 was hella high  
 now it's hella low  
 did you ever put yo'  
 mattress on the flo'  
 did you ever miss going home  
 miss getting a visit  
 try to sneak a talk on the phone  
 man i just wonder  
 who you are

-T-Maine, 150 Crew

From The Beat: You really took our topic and broke it down. Had us hearing voices like a clown. Or are they real? 'Cause we can feel just what you're saying. Who is that ghost? Do we hear praying? You really got us going. Thanks for you poem!

## You Used To Love Me (For 2 Years)

Do you know what 1 + 1 is?  
 I can tell you it isn't 2.  
 In a relationship it's  
 1 strong love for 1 another  
 I used to tell everyone that  
 When at Starbucks I sat with my lady  
 When she left, I went crazy.  
 Sometimes I can't believe she left me  
 And it takes me awhile to see  
 I think she didn't really love me  
 And alone is so hard to be  
 After you've been with someone everyday  
 For 2 years, and "I love you" we'd say  
 We used to plan on getting married when I turned 18  
 Guess what? I'm 18 now  
 And I think, "wow"  
 We used to want to be next to one another buried.

-Shadow, 150 Crew

From The Beat: It's very hard to part from the person you love so much and see everyday. We can't tell you the pain will go away (though we wish we could) but we can tell you that you will learn a lot from this relationship. You will learn what you want and what you don't want in your future relationships. Good luck!

**We used to plan  
 on getting married  
 when I turned 18  
 Guess what?  
 I'm 18 now  
 And I think, "wow"  
 We used to want  
 to be next to one  
 another buried**

## Ghost of Cellies Past

Sometimes I sit in my room and I think "who was here before me" as I sit in my room I see marks they left behind.

She was a young lady age of sixteen. She wasn't into school and couldn't spell that good. She was a lady of sin, not yet seeked God.

She was a Mexican American, with long black hair. She liked to wear what she felt and what she liked however her parents did not approve. Her parents were very distant since she was a young teen. Her mother was a great cook who stayed at home, while her dad worked for construction, but often he was hung over after work.

Her dad did not beat her, but sometimes mean to her. Rachael (the young girl) used to be close to her dad, but his love belonged to alcohol. Rachael fiend for a touch of a male love. She then got a boyfriend. When she fell deeply in love with him, Rachael's boyfriend Carl, questioned her love.

He asked her to hold some illegal substances for just awhile, so she did. As soon as she took it, the door busted open, and before she knew it Rachael was in Juvenile Hall on her way to CYA for a few years of her innocent life.

Before she left Juvenile Hall she left a print for me to know exactly who she was on the wall, and on the door said, "R+C". Rachael was still in love.

**-Damia, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** Beautiful imagination. Unfortunately this story is so real. We are sure that there is some female out there sitting in the Hall with a similar story.

## A Telling Story

Sometimes I sit in my room and look at the walls.

I look at the drawings and the writing.

It tells me a lot about the people here before me.

For instance, I'll see gang writing, and I know a gang-member was in here,

or I'll see a certain neighborhood written, and I know someone was here that was from that neighborhood.

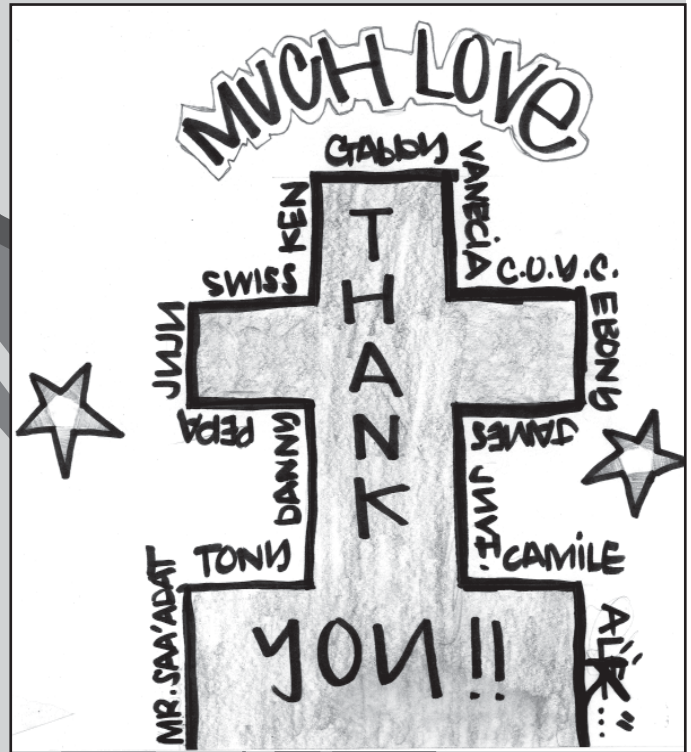
I think about the fact that they had similar problems, (whoever they were), and had a past just like I do.

Counselors think that the writers are destroying property, but I think it tells a story.

**-Dominic, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** It is telling a story. Why do you think the majority of what you see on the wall is neighborhoods and gangs? What is going through the minds of these folks writing this on the wall? Your past is similar to theirs. Write to us (on the Beat's wall). What's your story?

**Before she left Juvenile Hall she left a print for me to know exactly who she was on the wall**



## My Broken Heart

When raindrops fall from the sky  
I look to you and ask you why

Do you choose this day

To bring me out of the dark

Only for you to say

You've been cheatin' on me

And that there is no more "we"

And there never will be again

I spill my guts to you like everyday

For 2 years you've been my life

Do you not remember when you used to sign your letters "your wife"

You really hurt me where it cannot heal

Why can't you tell me "I love you" still?

I took care of you when we lived on the streets  
And I used to send you poems I wrote you in The Beat

But all that's in the past you say

Why can't you be with me today?

I'll love you forever, you own my heart

When I think about you — the water works start

Now I'm over you and you can't stand it

Tellin' me all the time together we spent

I just want you to remember

I was the one who took care of you since 2 years ago  
that September

**-Shadow, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** Heartbreak is somethin' vicious and it can break even the toughest person. And if you still see that girl a lot, the pain just might worsen. It's gonna be hard to get over her, but we have to tell you — that anyone who will cheat on you isn't trustworthy — therefore not worthy of you. Stay strong and you will one day find a chic that's worthy of your time. Keep your head up and remember that you will find true love even after that September!

## Dad

I'm so sorry  
What did I do?  
No! I take that back  
I didn't do anything to you  
You put you in there  
Away from home  
In your cell like me  
All alone  
It's not my fault  
No one but you  
I'm sick of this pain  
I think I'm through  
Why did you do that?  
Why did you go?  
I wanted to be your friend  
By now I'm your foe  
I never got that chance to know you  
Never met outside  
What do I do now?  
Just go for a ride?  
I'm tired of this BS  
Tired of trying  
Tired of caring  
And all of this crying  
I'm over you  
All your games and lies  
You lost your chance  
Stop all your tries  
All I say for now is  
Goodbye!

**-Sarah, San Luis Obispo**

*From The Beat: Strong, sad, angry poem, Sarah. We wish you and your dad had had a better chance to build a stronger relationship. Do you think you'll talk to your dad again after some breathing time? If so, what would you say? Would you tell him of the hurt you feel? Would you tell him how you want your relationship to be? Whatever happens, it's important for you to protect yourself and get on with your life?*

## One Girl

She left  
Two minutes later  
Came back  
Left her drink  
She slipped  
She fell  
She didn't understand  
She couldn't walk  
What was going on?  
She couldn't talk  
Her head was spinning  
And then  
Dark  
She fell  
Hit her head  
Woke up hours later  
Bruised, beat up  
Hung over  
Blood everywhere  
She didn't even know  
She ended up pregnant  
From that night's fall  
She learned a good lesson  
Never leave your drink  
Lying around at a party

That night will never leave her side. She will never forget the face of that old man who hurt her that night. My advice to all young ladies is stop now before it's too late, and if you're not ready to stop, never leave your drink lying around.

**-Desiree, San Luis Obispo**

*From The Beat: Nobody should have to experience violation like that. It seems like we don't hear about date rape drugs for a while and then just as it seems that they have disappeared, we hear another sad story about a female being taken advantage of. Thanks for making us aware again. We hope this young woman had somebody to talk to and give her support after that night. Doctors at [www.girlhealth.org](http://www.girlhealth.org) recommend that a woman tell someone that she trusts after being raped, and visit a hospital for a medical check up. If you don't have someone you trust to talk to, many hospitals will recommend counseling services.*

## Ants On Potato Bug

I've heard plenty of people say, "I don't care." I think what makes people say, "I don't care" is hiding from the truth and stress, and trying to hide from emotions. People give up when people in society don't want to accept each other because they are fat, ugly, the things people do, the way they do them, or just because they are so damn shallow.

Here's a little story a good friend told me. There once was a potato bug on his back and he couldn't flip back over and some ants started to attack him. That's how people are nowadays. They just don't care how the other person feels. That's why people give up. A lot of the time, it's just pure frustration. I don't think there's anything I don't care about. There's things I care very little about because it's just not important. I care about getting out of this place.

**-Pete, San Luis Obispo**

*From The Beat: Whoa, that image of ants swarming the potato bug gave us the shivers. It's sad that people gang up and hate on other people. Why do they do it? Is there a good way to deal with haters, without losing yourself and what you care about? Do you think folks can do anything that can keep the ants and the "I don't cares" at bay? We want to hear your ideas.*

## Dribbling

Once there was a time when I was on a basketball team and it was my first time playing basketball. The coach told me to dribble between my legs, and I told him I couldn't do it, and then I tried and I did it.

I told my mom I would fight with my sister and call her names, yet one time someone else was calling my sister names and I stood up and said don't do that again.

Once I had a test and I did it in a half an hour. And one time, there was this kid that got grounded and he was crying and he was tearing up his stuff, and that one person taught me not to be grounded.

**-Mike, San Luis Obispo**

*From The Beat: You learned a lot when you didn't mean to. Are you still learning? Do you try to push yourself to do things you think you can't do, or haven't tried to do? Do you think the lessons you learn through new experiences change you? How, and is it good or bad?*



## Like A Flower

I'm like a flower, I need fresh air.

I'm like a flower, because if somebody step on me in here,  
don't nobody care.

I'm like a flower, if I don't get sun I can't bloom.

I'm like a flower getting plucked to see if she love me or not.

I'm like a flower. I need the nice treatments as the outs.

**-Geeky Boy, San Mateo**

**From The Beat:** You have written a wonderful simile, which is when you compare two things that you introduce with "like" or "as." Here's another one: you are like a diamond in the rough. With a little polishing (which comes with maturity and experience), you'll be worth a million!

## I Wish I Could Fly Away

Sometimes I sit back and dream. I wish I was a bird able to fly anywhere I wanted. If trouble came my way, I'd be like I'm out. Some of my boys would hate it, but I'd still kick it and tell them about my adventures.

Looking for freedom. Looking for somewhere I belong, but some things always follow me.

When I get out of here I am going to travel and get out of this place. I feel like my wings are already clipped, not being able to go to the places or do the things I am able to do. People judging by the way I present myself, but there's always those people. They keep me moving towards my accomplishments.

I wish I was a bird to not trip off everything else except myself.

**-Ap, San Mateo**

**From The Beat:** The best thing about a bird's clipped wings is that they grow back! You can regrow your wings, too, and fly out of here and into something entirely different. We admire you for wanting to travel. The world is a big place with many different beliefs and ways of living. It can only enrich you to experience as much of it as possible. Keeping moving toward your goal, and you will get there.

## Lost Youngsta With Attitude

If there was a way to change my anger problem by talking them out instead of by fights or snappin' at the wrong people . . .

I just keep it all inside. Counselors can't help me. Nobody, not even my own mom, could get me to tell her what's wrong.

I'm lost. I don't know what I'm doing. Sometimes I get so mad. I found a place where I belong and not turning back.

If I could let it all out I could be peaceful, but the life I lead will always be the same.

**-Sapo, San Mateo**

**From The Beat:** It doesn't sound like you've found that sense of belonging if you still don't have anyone to tell what's wrong. Instead of trying to find a way to confront what's wrong, you're found a home with people who help you forget you have the problems, but the problems remain, and they'll continue to eat at you from the inside until you find a way of starting to deal with them. Why not try writing about some of the problems — you can keep it anonymous if you don't want people to know who you are, but at least the problems will start going outside instead of poisoning your heart and mind.

**Sometimes I sit  
back and dream.**

## Involved With the System

I wish I was never involved with the system. I lost practically all my childhood years since I was twelve. I've been in Hillcrest in and out a lot of times.

I've been locked up almost every summer vacation since I was twelve. When I was out they never even let me go to any mainstream high school. I been in all these probation schools. I'm almost 18, and I've never been to high school yet. It was all because I've been incarcerated for such stupid things.

All the adults in my life tell me I'm not going to make it and probably might end up in prison. Being in the system is filled with a lot of downs, but I still try and keep my head up.

**-Randy, San Mateo**

**From The Beat:** This is a very sad piece, Randy. Getting into the system to begin with is the biggest predictor of who will get entangled by it. Do you feel those probation schools taught you valuable things? You can write well, so they must have taught you something. If you are incarcerated for "such stupid things," then those stupid things should be easy to give up... or are they? Because if you can't sacrifice those "stupid things" for your own freedom, then maybe you like it here more than you think.

**I'm lost. I don't  
know what I'm doing.  
Sometimes I get  
so mad.**

## Change People's Lives

I want to change by stopping drinking and smoking. I want to make something of myself and to become a person that works at Hillcrest to help little young people and change their ways. I want to make a difference in people's lives.

Or I will become a FBI agent to find rapists, woman killers, and child killers. The reason for this is because to make families rest at night. People can live happy lives. To switch people's lives once again, that is my main point.

Or I will become a drug counselor to help people stop using drugs and stop drinking. This will be able to help people and have families and calm the people down, stop people to be hostile when they are not using. By doing this, people will switch lives.

But if I can't make my life I will join the army, fight for the people, the kids to grow up protected. Then maybe they might want to switch their lives. I want to change other people's lives.

**-Joseph, San Mateo**

**From The Beat:** Man, Joseph — you've got the makings of a modern day superhero. The element of this piece that stands out the most is the repetition of the idea that you want to help other people switch up their lives for the better. How can you deal with your problems first — change your own ways so that you're then able to help others? Then, you'll be able to speak and teach and help from the position from the knowledge of what it takes to overcome your own problems.

Good luck — the world needs people like you with your motivation to help us out with our problems.

## We Can Change It

What would the world be with just peace and no anger?  
What if instead of a mug you got a friendly  
look from a stranger?  
There would be no guns  
There would be no fire  
No matter what race you are  
You're always for hire  
If this is the world  
You'll wait for your future still to come  
What if it was no work, just fun?  
Then you need to snap to reality  
And realize that you can never deprive earth of its mentality  
It always was and always will  
Never ending graves will soon start to fill  
The world death comes to plow  
When we think of war  
If you give someone trouble  
They'll keep wanting more  
Institution, jail, prison in a cell  
Some people say heaven is light  
But the world is hell  
Many people have deprived mental issues but even worse  
War leaves billions of us with used tissues  
America is great with the freedom of able speak  
Only if there's a loss, that's when eyes start to leak  
If you're tired of war and you want to arrange it  
Because we are the only ones who can change it

**-Marshall, San Mateo**

*From The Beat: There's power and truth in your poem, both in your realization about how the reality is that the world often offers some grim situations, and in your realization that we're the only ones with the power to do anything to change it. When things seem to be at their worst, and the world seems to be worse than the worst hell you could have imagined, how can you begin to bring a little bit of light to your corner of the world? Are there others who can help you shine light into a world filled with racism, war, and death?*

## i wish

i was a bird  
so i could  
fly away from  
all this  
madness

**-Telefaro, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Spread your wings.*

**All my boys call me a  
captain**

**But I don't care  
because I treat**

**Girls with respect even  
when I'm rappin'**

## Goals

Bullets, blunts, and a phat bankroll. Which is what everybody thinks about when they touchdown! All the goals they tell their public pretender and the judge and they POs. Why front? You just hurting yo'self when you come back, then cry because the judge don't give you another chance.

Man is that serious? Unless you don't give a damn, or you just that gangsta or a thug, it's never too late to change. I just read an article on Demetrius "Hook" Mitchell, which is an Oakland playground legend. He turned his life around and got out of prison still striving for his dream. So it's never too late.

**-Jd B5, SF/YGC**

*From The Beat: Here's another one of those fine examples that show us you can put your mind to a great purpose when you choose to. Are you inspired by the life of "Hook" Mitchell to try to follow in his footsteps — or, at least, to make sure your footsteps do not lead back in this direction?*

## How We Feel

You wouldn't understand; how could you?  
You were never my age  
you never went through what I do.  
Why can't I go? Don't you trust me?  
How could you do this? Don't you see?  
I am not a child, I'll be fine on my own —  
I hate you, get out, leave me alone!  
All of my friends are doing it  
why can't I?  
Don't worry,  
it's not like I am going to die.  
These words are said when in those years  
all things grow and become teens' fears.  
What parents don't know — this may sound cheesy —  
the times have changed. It ain't easy.

**-Nelly, San Mateo**

*From The Beat: Times have changed, but there's something timeless about this piece. It seems that with every new generation, there's a new set of misunderstandings between parents and their children. However, we feel what we presume your parents are saying on the other side of this poem — that the drugs you're taking are dangerous; and that with things as serious as drugs it doesn't matter if everyone else is doing it, that the most important thing for them is that you're not. How can you more clearly describe to your parents the things that you're going through? How have the times changed? What's not easy — maybe with their help, it'll be just a bit easier.*

## Can I Get An Understanding?

(Dedicated to all the females)

I always think about why females  
Never say what they really want from me  
I'm here to give you what you want and need —  
Can I get an understanding?  
All my boys call me a captain  
But I don't care because I treat  
Girls with respect even when I'm rappin' —  
Can I get an understanding?  
I need y'all to speak ya mind  
So I give you love all the time  
I promise I'll treat y'all right  
And when you're down I'll hold you tight —  
Can I get an understanding?  
I need to know  
If you don't want me to let go  
You can be my princess  
If I can get an understanding.  
Someone tell me something.

**-Self Esteem, San Mateo**

*From The Beat: Usually when we get a piece dedicated to the females we cringe at what's to follow, but you drop a piece calling for honest communication that's written with respect. It's hard to get that understanding, whether from a female or a male — it's one of life's great challenges to form a relationship of mutual trust and respect. One of the few things we've learned in our old age is that honesty begets honesty; that is, the more honest you are, the more honest the object of your affection will be in return. What does it mean to you to treat a girl right, for her to be your princess?*

**Unless you don't give a  
damn, or you just that  
gangsta or a thug, it's  
never too late to change.**

**I Wish, I Strive**

I wish I was never caught up in the Juvenile Hall justice system. I wish I never had a record and I wish I never met those friends that I met and ratted me out.

But it's all good because I'm only getting stronger in here. Not just physical but mentally, and plus I'm striving to get my act right and I know it's going to be hard. I know that I'm still mentally scarred, but I'm trying to heal it.

I wish I lived in a better environment because it's rough where I live with all the killing and all. So I wish I wish and I strive I strive and I will try to stay alive.

**-Ju-Nut, San Mateo**

*From The Beat: Your reaction to the circumstances that landed you in the Hall — especially towards those who "ratted" you out — is admirable, especially given the temptation to blame them for the trouble you're in. How are you striving to get better mentally? How are you developing your mind while inside? What do your mental scars come from? What's it going to take for you to get your act right? Is there any chance that you'll be able to move somewhere else when you get out, so that you're able to avoid all the drama that's going on in your town right now?*

**I'm striving to get my act right  
and I know it's going to be hard.  
I know that I'm still mentally  
scarred, but I'm trying to heal it.**

**Battle After Battle**

Battle after battle

I struggle to see the sun rise

Hidden emotions screaming

Every time I let my guns cry

Shedding lead tears

To compensate for my lost soul

Showing no remorse

I never mourn; I'm a lost hope

Revenge!

My driving motivation to survive

Pride is all I have

Won't let it be compromised

The demise of time

Has put my life on the line

So I take a deep breath, step

And ride for mine

And when I see enemies

I paint the streets

Won't let you see when I'm weak

I keep my pain discreet

You pay the cost for being soft

So I stay cocked and loaded

Lift the barrel of freedom

And let emotions start flowin'

**-Michael, San Luis Obispo**

*From The Beat: What are you avenging? Your lost freedom? Who/what will you seek revenge upon? Is it going to help your future? Have you ever heard the saying, "pride goes before the fall?" Pride has led to a lot of people's downfalls because it clouds their ability to see things clearly — the big picture of life. Have you ever let your pride get the better of you? A time when you just couldn't let whatever was bothering you go and it led to you getting yourself in bigger trouble? At the same time, most of us think it's healthy to have some pride, so where's the balance? What is your pride based on? Your intellect? Strength of body? Strength of spirit? Your family? Your hometown? Your community? Your country? Your scrill? Your possessions?*

**Should Have Listened**

All you did was try to help me and look out for your lil' sis'. You told me that what I was doing was wrong and that I was going to screw up my life and end up in the Hall. Even still, I didn't listen and said to myself, "That will never happen to me."

And now look where I am, sitting in Juvenile Hall missing you and wishing I was at home with you. I should have listened to you and all the boys — you knew what you were talking about. If I had left drugs and all the bad things behind when you told me, I would have never seen these four white walls in my cell that I new look at every day. I thank you and love you with all my heart.

This is dedicated to my brother and a special group of his friends. I love you all!

**-Little Breed, San Mateo**

*From The Beat: Now that you recognize the advice that you should have taken, how will you take worthy advice more seriously in the future? More importantly, now that you've recognized the danger of the life you were leading, how will you live differently? It sounds like you're surrounded by good people — don't be afraid to use them for support.*

**Keeping Hope Alive**

I wish I was at my house and not in the temporary house I'm living in right now. The temporary house is nothing like what I would be living like if I was outside these walls. I wish I was home, but I don't regret being here or being in my room wishing I can get out.

Where I'm at, that's where it ain't nothing I could do about it, but wait to the day when I could be at my own house. But until then I'm tryin' to do coo' in this situation I'm in.

Wishing ain't going to change nothing so why do it. What wishing do for you is give a person hope. That's really all a person need to get through the struggle that the wisher is going through. Hope and loved ones is the only thing that keep us on lock down going anyway.

To whoever reading my writing, keep wishing, keep that hope alive.

**-Leek B5, SF/YGC**

*From The Beat: Wishing doesn't change things immediately, but if you want something badly enough, if you wish on something hard enough, you may just do what you have to do to make it happen. We agree with you that holding onto hope is critical, and we hope you hold onto yours.*

**A Dark Plantation**

This place is nothing but a dark plantation picking our freedom instead of cotton.

This place is a place for narcissistic nut jobs to control us bad little boys and get off at us being at their very whim. This place makes you scared of your own shadow and fear your life if you look at someone.

This place is run by pessimistic rats that use the littlest excuse to bring you down and torture you, keep you in so they can get a bigger paycheck.

This place changes you, but the question is how.

**-Smokey, San Mateo**

*From The Beat: This is a dark description of the Hall — comparing it to slavery and calling staff nut jobs is some serious stuff. How are you being changed by this experience? What are you doing to make sure that it doesn't scar you permanently? If you were running the system, how would you do it differently?*



## Obstacles

I can relate to Lil' Johnny in getting a girl pregnant, because I'm pregnant myself right now. I wish I were at home or out of the halls, doing something with my friends and family and other people. I wish I were with my baby daddy right now just so he could hold me close to him. I wish I was not in here with my baby. I wish I could change my life so bad but I know I can't.

**-Reniqua GU, SF/YGC**

*From The Beat: Thanks for this honest piece. We understand that you're in a tough spot right now, but why do you say you can't do anything to change your life? Just because you are in the halls doesn't mean your life is over. What else do you need to change in your life, and what will it take for that to happen?*

## I Wish I ...

i wish i was at home with my love' ones  
'cause i feel like just goin' crazy  
i wish i would never have sold any drugs  
'cause i would not be in this situation right now  
i would be kickin' it somewhere with my girl  
i wish i never came here  
'cause my life would be way better than it is right now  
'cause all i am doin' is waitin' on this camp to let me come up  
i wish i would have never went to the turf that morning  
'cause i would be out somewhere right now  
i wish i never knew what weed or coke was  
then i would never have any sales cases  
i wish i was at anyplace outside of here right now  
i wish i could hurry up and get to camp  
so i can get my home passes and do the time  
i wish i would have never messed up my life and put myself in here  
because everything i did — i did it for a good reason  
but the reasons i did things just were not worth it

**-Darryl, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: You've got to take those wishes to change the past and make them into commitments to change the future. For example: don't sell drugs, don't go to the turf, stay away from weed and coke, don't mess up and put yourself back in here. And then remember those good reasons to do bad things — aren't good enough!*

## Past To Present

Look at then  
look at now  
I was happy then  
but now I'm all frowns.  
I wish I could  
and hope I might  
get out of dis place  
with all my rights.  
I can't take  
being locked in a room  
that needs to be broomed  
with a roommate  
who's a fool!  
When I get out  
I can't wait  
to just get up and get out  
leave dis damn place.  
I just gotta do my time  
and be good  
den when I get out  
I'm a try to lead my cousin  
out the 'hood.

**-The Gorgeous 1, San Mateo**

*From The Beat: It seems like the date when you'll be able to exit "dis damn place" is right around the corner. We're curious about how you're going to go about leading your cousin out of the 'hood. What will you offer her in its place? When she's says that she never wants to leave her 'hood, and that she's down for it until the end, what will you say in response?*

**You guys never see  
Me try  
All you see is when  
I fail**

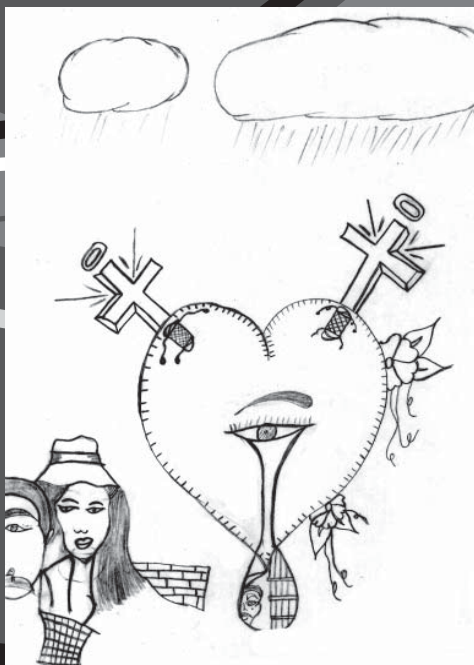
## Try So Hard And Get Nowhere

You guys never see  
Me try  
All you see is when  
I fail  
So you lock me up  
Here in jail  
Like a family of apples and one  
Is rotten  
Like this whole time I been  
Plottin' against myself  
Subconsciously  
Liquor and drugs are just  
A tease  
They get you high  
They make you feel  
Good  
But eventually it's gotta stop  
You'll get harassed by a  
Cop  
Don't die and get popped  
The dangers in society  
Must be stopped

Hopin' for heaven  
But going to hell  
Oh shhh, it's the big  
One himself it's  
Jack the Ripper  
He ain't much of  
A tweaker  
He won't kill me  
If I smoke the  
Reefer  
Smoked too much  
Got too high  
Now I'm afraid  
I just might die

**-Coda, San Luis Obispo**

*From The Beat: Your opening lines are so powerful, Coda. How can you get recognition for the good you do? Can you ask for it? Seriously, sometimes it's necessary to blow your own horn because people are so busy with other things they just don't think about you. Can you do more good so that it's more obvious? If you find something that works, let us know because we all could use more recognition. And about the liquor and drugs, do you know how you're gonna stay clean when you're facing them on the outs? If you got more positive recognition and felt better about you and what you do, do you think you'd look to drugs less to feel good?*

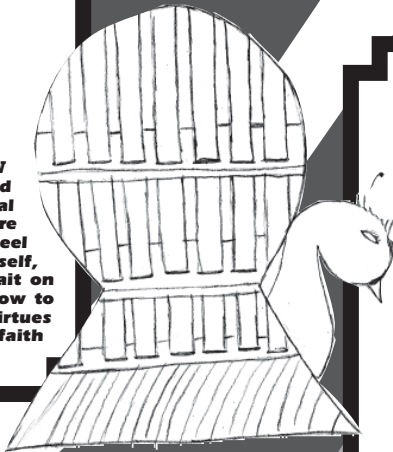


## How Could I Listen

i wish i was in the past  
 slow things down and don't go so fast  
 turn my life right around  
 get my life off the ground  
 i wonder what happened  
 at some times  
 i am only sixteen years old  
 but my life is bitter and cold  
 i can think about what i have done  
 and only wonder how he won  
 i let him get a hold  
 the devil had won  
 but he wouldn't let go  
 i got what i wanted and it was wrong  
 how could i listen to the devil  
 to get what i wanted  
 now my heart is cold  
 and hard as a rock  
 i should've fought for my soul  
 now i don't know what to do  
 i'm trapped like a fool  
 i am a man of little faith  
 what i need is time with god  
 i hope i find him soon enough  
 for sure that will be tough  
 i love you jesus  
 come into my life  
 please dear jesus  
 turn me right  
 i am willing to go without a fight  
 i want to know what to do right  
 please forgive me of my sin  
 i want my new life to begin  
 and with you jesus  
 i know i will win

**-David, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Surrounded in here by hate and intimidation, this is the perfect place for a spiritual warrior to start facing the shame and pain of where he's been and what he's done. As soon as you feel remorse, you're forgiven; but to forgive yourself, you need to change your way of living. Don't wait on certainty of faith to act a new way. You know how to take, now learn how to give — pray for the virtues Jesus lived. In helping others, you'll feel your faith lift. In giving yourself, you'll receive his gift.*



**the only reason they're  
 stoppin' you  
 is 'cause you're black**

## Why I Do What I Do

The reason I do what I do, is because it's how I was brought up. It's mandatory when you're from my 'hood.

All my life, growing up in Decoto, I've lived a rough life. My dad was always in and out of prison; and all I had was my mom and the rest of my familia.

Notice I don't say "my homies" — well, because my homies is my fam! We ain't a gang, we're a family. You die for me, I die for you. That's how shhh is when you're a solid homie like me. You see, we all are in the struggle together.

Some say it's stupid, because I fight over this color. Well, homie, let me tell you — this goes way deeper than a color! I got a reason I fight. I can't tell you what it is, but just to let you know what's up.

**-Young Gato, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: We understand that your loyalty goes deep: "you die for me, I die for you." We just want you to see that it is not really a life style but a death cult — and it condemns the next generation to growing up without a father in the home, just like you did. 'Cause it's not just a death cult, it's a prison cult: fathers and sons in a patriarchal family line that condemns each new generation to death and/or prison. We understand the intensity of your feelings, but want you to understand that's the problem.*

## Checkmate

this life is like a chess game  
 you always got to synchronize a plan  
 when really it's just ninjas  
 plottin' to take what's in your hand  
 when you thinking about  
 that dope case you caught last may  
 you gettin' run up on by five-oh in the bay  
 they always want to know  
 what's your name and who's that  
 but the only reason they're stoppin' you  
 is 'cause you're black  
 you don't seem to realize  
 you're not paying attention  
 while under your nose  
 police gettin' your new extension  
 now that they know where you live  
 they gon' try to make it a wrap  
 and when you're sleeping  
 swat's gon' come in with some heavy gats  
 now that they found yo' dope  
 they gon' put you in a lockdown slumber  
 and the only reason you're here  
 is 'cause you served a under'  
 checkmate

**-Marley, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: It's like that chess match between the champion and the computer, where the computer got fed all the champion's past moves. Guess who won? So we suggest you refuse to play in a game like that. Get out the dope game if you really want to watch your back. We like your rhymes, but if you don't like doing time — make up your mind to change your game.*

## Nowhere to Turn

I can relate to "Lil' Johnny" because most people that I am around, including myself, have been in a situation where you feel like you have nowhere to turn.

Sometimes I feel desperate to do anything. Like for money, I would be doing almost everything just to have money in my pocket every day. But I always felt like there was another way. I happened to be around people that do bad things. So, to me, when you do things normally, it's hard to change.

My advice to people who are desperate, is to wait for the right things to come around — because they will! You just have to wait for the right time.

**-Phillip, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: You see things pretty clearly. Changing may be the hardest thing you'll ever have to do in your entire life — yet your entire life depends on your taking on and following through with necessary changes.*

## I Wish I Was At Home

i wish i was at my house right now  
doing what i have to do  
to prevent being in the hall  
and just spending my time  
with my family  
doing what i have to do  
doing positive things  
staying out of trouble  
and the best way  
to prevent being in the hall  
to stay out of trouble  
is staying at home  
just doing what you have to do  
complete your programs  
just do what you have to do

**-Chato, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat: You see what's real, and though you can't be home right now, remember the way you feel right now — so when you get home you can stay there. Be smart, be square.**

**i wish all my  
african-american families  
could all come together  
and support one another**

## Life In Hell

this hell we live in  
is full of thugs  
so you can't be scared  
fear nobody but god  
bow down to no one  
just 'cause they pack a gun  
and if you want out of the dirt  
take yourself back to church  
or stay in the game and put in work  
i've lived around killas all my life  
and ain't feared no one's gun or knife  
i was raised with a thirty-eight  
but i haven't had to use it yet  
i know if i ever do  
the pen' is where i will be going to  
but if a ninja put a hand on my head  
then he's gon' wish he was dead  
while other ninjas be sleepin'  
at night i am out there creepin'  
'cause i ain't gone let no one  
sneak up on me when i am slippin'  
i'm gon' ride till i die  
i'm gon' ride to stay alive

**-Sticky Ricky, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat: It's like self-hypnosis, 'cause you know this ends in prison or a grave — but you can't wake up to save your life! We understand it's what you've been taught, but you're smart enough to see you'll get caught by the law and live in prison — or caught by the lawless and die on a mission. Wake up from the spell and make a better decision than volunteering for hell.**

## Gracias Beat

What's up Beat? ¿Cómo han estado? Espero que bien porque yo bien. Ya estoy cerca para salir. Bueno ahora quiero hablar acerca de la importancia del Beat. Durante el tiempo que estuve encerrado el Beat siempre me ha dado la oportunidad de poder opinar acerca de cualquier tema que pasa en nuestras vidas. Ellos me aconsejan lo mejor y desean lo mejor para todos.

Espero que el Beat siga creciendo y pueda darle más oportunidades a los encarcelados para expresar sus ideas. Les deseo todo lo mejor para el futuro y gracias por todo.

**From The Beat: No sabes como nos da tanta alegría saber que hay personas que admiran nuestra obra. También te agradecemos a ti y todos los que hacen que el Beat Within tenga éxito. Esperamos que donde sea que te manden que tengas mucha suerte al igual que todos. Otra vez te agradecemos por hablar muy bien de nosotros.**

## Thank You, Beat

What is up, Beat? How have you been doing? I hope you're doing fine because I am. I'm close to getting out of here. Well, now I would like to talk about the importance of The Beat. During the time that I've been locked up, The Beat Within have been giving us the opportunity to throw out our opinions about any issues that go around in our lives. They give me advice me for the best and wish the best for all.

I hope The Beat keeps growing and continues giving inmates the opportunity to express their ideas. I wish you the best for the future and thank you for everything.

**-Postrulo B1, SF/YGC**

## Wishes and Dreams

i wish i could have my freedom  
also my first love back  
i wish all my african-american families  
could all come together  
and support one another  
i wish my father was in life  
so i could tell people about  
my father and what i know about him  
i wish i had a job  
so i could support my mother  
she's struggling  
trying to support my little brother and me  
by herself  
i wish i could take  
all my mother's pain away  
i know most of it  
comes from her worrying  
about my little brother  
and me too

**-Unefarious, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat: If you want your life to be less precarious, you do need to be less nefarious. Just start to do what your mother would want you to — then you'll know in your heart that you did your part.**

**if you want out of the dirt  
take yourself back to church  
or stay in the game  
and put in work**



## Down And Out

Well one of my desperate times was when I was down and out had no money and no father figure in my life. My mom was all that I had and she was doing her best to raise me by herself but some people can't do it on their own.

My mom was using all her money to pay the bills for the house and put food on the table so all that extra stuff that I wanted I had to get it on my own and too young to get a job and I started feeling like I was all alone by myself and the world got colder and had to start doing everything on my own buying all my clothes my shoes and I had to start paying bills.

I never had a father in my life to tell me the wrong or rights and so ran to a life of crime for money and this is where it got me so my advice is to get help and don't do crime 'cause this is where you will be.

**-Shannon, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** We all go through periods in our lives where we feel desperate and alone. We hope that your experience with these struggles has made you stronger and wiser. What have you learned from all this? The world can be cold, but what can you do to make the world a warmer environment?

## Stuck In A Whirlpool

Well, I'm in the land of the lost and it's not a place of pride.

I can only wish I thought before I took a step. Now I'm paying a price — deprived from my baby cousins, niece, mom, and of course you, the angel, God sent me from His side to aid my in my darkest hours of my life.

To me, you are a goddess of beauty, and wisdom. You are my queen. You may not be able to open these sealed doors, but you take me away from negativity. You are a scar in my life, which I am proud of wearing. I was a troubled person that could not fit in with society. I chose not to. You gave me that extra push in my head, from sand storms to a world with no war.

I was already on the line between bad and good, once I was free, but as you can see, it was not enough. The time I have now is more than enough. This time is only meant for me to find myself in my thoughts. You help me in my journey, help me picture the person I want to be for myself, and for my little family. Even if you were to leave me, I'd still love you for the help. This time what I'm preparing to do is to make me a better person for both of us. I'll make you proud of being mine, just watch. I love you, Sexay!

**-Gman B4, SF/YGC**

**From The Beat:** It sounds to us that you were once stuck in a whirlpool, but that you've grabbed onto a current that is pulling you up and out. Keep swimming in that direction, and you'll reach the shore. We are very moved by your statement that you would love her even if she left you for what she's given you so far. That is truly a statement of love. You're lucky to have her. Now, show her that she's lucky to have you.

## The Positive Of A Pregnancy

On its way,  
a baby comes along  
to bring a family  
joy and happiness.  
With the joy and happiness  
that is brought,  
comes a new life  
to share fun times and memories with.  
With the memories that are shaped  
give you moments to look back on,  
moments to give you comfort  
to share with your loved ones.  
This baby will bring you  
a love you've never felt,  
and an experience you will never forget.

**-Baby D, San Mateo**

**From The Beat:** We wish that everyone looked at pregnancy in this way — if they did, they'd treat their newborn children with the love and care they need to grow up healthy and happy. Has anyone close to you ever been pregnant? If so, what was it like to see someone grow so large while nurturing a new life? How will you raise your children? Having a child is definitely an experience a parent will never forget.

**I was down and out had  
no money and no father  
figure in my life**

## Estoy Desesperado Por La Salida

Estoy desesperado porque no allo la salida en como salir de aqui. Por más que quiero salir de este lugar no puedo salir de aqui. Ahora me arrepiento haber caído a la juvenil. Me siento mal por mi familia quienes son los únicos que me vienen a visitar. Ahora me he dado cuenta que en este lugar no vale nada.

Les doy un consejo, para todos los chavos de mi edad: que piensen antes de hacer una pendejadas. Mirenme a mí, hice una pendejada y ahora me siento desesperado por no salir de este lugar tan culero. Por eso no hagan pendejadas que no valga la pena, porque luego van a estar como yo que ahora quisiera salir de este lugar.

**From The Beat:** Esperamos que los chavos sigan tus consejos y se den cuenta donde realmente pueden llegar a parar si no aprovechan de las cosas buenas que les ofrece la vida. No vale la pena hacer tonteras que los llebe a lugares donde hay sólo sufrimientos.

## I'm Desperate For An Exit

I'm desperate because I can't find an exit to get out of here. The harder I try to get out of this place, the more I can't get out. Now I regret ending up in here. I feel sorry for my family who are the only people who visit me. Now I've realized that this place isn't worth it.

Let me give some advice to all the guys my age: think about things before you do any shhh. Take a look at me, I did a stupid thing and now I feel desperate because I cannot to get out of this place. That's why you shouldn't do anything stupid that isn't worth it, because later, you will be like me who wants to get out of this place.

**-Smokey, Marin**

**Mirenme a mí, hice una  
pendejada y ahora me  
siento desesperado por  
no salir de este  
lugar tan culero**

## To Be Screwed Up

my life is screwed up  
i'm always screwed  
i wish for one day  
my life wasn't screwed  
i wish somebody else  
could trade lives with me  
so i could show them  
what it feels to be me  
if they could feel the thoughts  
that get thrown at me  
that aren't much better  
than the ones i had  
if they could think  
what i think in a day  
what sinking remorse i have  
how regretful i feel and am  
i might someday get  
some respect for a thang  
i will keep hoping  
just for that to happen  
but i doubt it will  
so in the meantime  
i guess i will just stay  
screwed up with no respect  
and grind my teeth

**-Brent, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** We give you respect for feeling remorse. Feeling regret, is the beginning of change. Don't beat yourself up to the point of paralysis. You can't change the past, no matter how much you'd like to. But you can work on changing yourself in the present. Grind your teeth less, treat yourself with self-respect. Offer yourself some understanding, and a helping hand. Whoever you hurt, you hurt yourself as well. Can't you tell?

## Right And Wrong To A

### Person Who Murder

Shhh, the way that I see it there is two sides to a person who murder someone. There's a right and there is a wrong and what I mean by right is when someone is showing you that they want your life they will take your mother, brother, and or sister's life.

I feel that you have every right to take that person's life to protect your own before that person makes his move and takes your life, but then at the same time he who kills for no reason is wrong.

For an example when a ninja had to do what he had to do to get what he got and the next ninja mad because he out here shinin'. They feel that they got the right to take that man's life because he got what you don't got and you mad because you be out there broke and he blowin' past you kickin' dust on you while you at the bus stop so you decide to smoke him for what he got.

**-Lil' Molly, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** What's up with people these days runnin' around with guns ready to kill people for material things? How can you make sure that you don't involve yourself with things that will get yo' wig split? Why do you think people feel it's okay to take a life? Brutal piece on how you see it in your community.

## The Day I Go Home

When the day comes for me to go home, it's gonna be very hard — because I don't know how to react. Happy! Scared! Nervous! Anxious! I'll feel them all at the same time!

When my release comes, it's gonna be the best thing that ever happened to me. It will be so overwhelming that I won't even know how to take it.

But when that day comes, the first thing I'm gonna do, is say goodbye to the people that I liked. I mean to those who really liked me, which will be staff and supervisors — because none of the detainees liked me. They were just pretending to, you know, being fake and just hating on a playa 'cause I gets love from everybody on staff.

Well, the story is never gonna end. So, until next time ...

**-Lil' Mama Hanna, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** We know you've had friends in the Hall, but it is hard when they move on and you're left on your own, with the only ones really knowing you being staff. Newcomers don't get it.

## The Room Before Me

I sit in my room late at night and think  
who was in that room before me,  
what race they were,  
their age,  
where they from,  
what gang they're in,  
what they in here for,  
how long they suffered in here for,  
what their family went through,  
and where they are at now.

I know there was a lot of people in that room before me  
but I make it one more person.

I can see their tagging all over the wall  
and carves in the door.

I obviously know their crime was serious  
because they wouldn't be in max for a petty crime.

I'm in here for a five-felony gun case  
and I pray it goes down to one felony.

I have to go now so piece to all.

**-Orozco, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** Nice on-topic writing. We also wish you the best with the outcome of your case. We also hope that you've learned a valuable lesson from your experience. How can you make it so that you'll never come back to the hall again? Does having a higher power or supportive family in your life help steer you in the right direction? What's your game plan upon leaving the Hall?

## I Just Wish

i just wish i was with my mom and dad

i wish i wasn't always sad

i wish i wasn't in this place

i wish i never caught a case

'cause now i'm going to placement

and i wish i didn't have to do this shhh

i wish i would'a been thinkin'

while i was with my homies smokin' and drinkin'

'cause now i'm in a place i don't want to be in

i just wish i had made better choices

**-Gina, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** It's natural to feel sad when you're facing consequences for choices that were bad. But stay strong and keep on keeping on, and you'll get home to mom and dad.

**The Night I Got Drunk (Part Two)**

This is Trenell aka Tree Girl. Remember how last week I wrote about how I got drunk with my sister, her boyfriend, and his friend?

When I left off last week, we were at this spot, and the dude that was on me, remember him? The ugly one? He put me on this garbage can because I was so drunk I couldn't walk.

Then these Mexican dudes was talkin' to me, so I started talking hella trash to them. Next thing I know, Damoore, my sister's boyfriend, and his friend, the ugly dude, are beating on this Mexican dude. So he ran away.

After that we walked all the way to the bus stop, hopped on the bus, and got kicked right back off — because I was talkin' hella trash to the bus driver!

So I was sittin' on the curb, and my sister's boyfriend came walking toward us, cussing my sister out for not controlling me! And then this girl who is my sister's boyfriend's cousin, came walking along. And she asked what was wrong with me — and I start talking hella trash to her!

So she instantly starts taking off on me while I was sitting there on the curb! She dragged me by my hair, and I couldn't fight back because I was so drunk!

My sister turns around and starts pulling the girl off my hair... and bam! Thank God it wasn't OPD and it was just Highway Patrol. So they asked my sister what was wrong with me. Now my sister was trying to walk away, but they would not let us leave — because I was drunk.

So they made me open my mouth and walk. Then they put us in the patrol car, and they drove me and my sister to my grandmother's house. But my grandmother said, "No!"

So the last person was my dad, and we drove all the way to San Leandro — and, lucky me, my dad happened to be just coming home! They had told us that if my dad was not home, we would be going to juvenile hall.

I had just got out on May twenty-seventh, and here I was already in trouble on my home supervision program! So, anyways, my dad was like, "Take her to juvenile hall!" But my sis' saved me.

And then they walked me up the stairs because I couldn't walk on my own. I was so intoxicated that I threw up on the floor — and I hit my head on the table. Then I went in my room and went straight to sleep, with my throwback jean fit on! Sweet dreams. The end.

**-T-girl, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: We suggest you leave alcohol alone. This story is all about why you don't need to be getting drunk, most especially when you're on home supervision! We wish you had drawn the moral of your story more clearly yourself, maybe promising to stop drinking. But then, a promise means nothing if you don't plan to keep it. After you read your story over in our pages though, we hope you see that when you drink you start to act dangerously — dangerous to your own health and freedom! So, how 'bout a story next week about your worst experience after smoking weed? One thing we know, is that you are a fine story teller. So write us another story, T-girl fka Tree-Girl.*

**This Ain't Cool**

Running from Camp ain't cool

Now I'm back in the Hall like a fool,  
but I had to make sure my baby mama was cool  
That's the only reason I ran

I tried to tell people, but they don't understand  
Now they're trying to send me somewhere by LA  
Where I'm going to have to do 9-12 months,

but that ain't cool

Because I got a three month old baby and one on the way

So for all the people going to Camp, make sure you stay

Dajon and John keep your head up

RIP Tim

**-On The Map, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Having two kids at a young age is gonna be hard. How are you planning for they're future? Do you think about changing some of your ways for your children? What kind of lessons do you wanna instill in your child? How do you plan on making the best of your time at the next placement you are sent to?*

**Damn**

Damn

I'm really locked up  
calling home on the collect phone  
just to say what's up  
The seven-minute past  
then its time to hang up

Damn

I'm really up  
the doors close  
my feet's itching

Damn

I got this jail life twisted

I'm missin' home,

I'm missin' my fam'

And most of all I miss Uncle Sam

'Cause he gave chances

when nobody did

Damn

I'm locked up

with a three-year-old kid

Damn...

Damn...

Damn...

**-Boog Money, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: If you could pick one pet peeve about the Hall, what would it be? Why do you think people come back so often if they claim to hate it so much? When you are released, what kind of changes do you need to make in your life so that you won't come back to the Hall and be there full time for your three year old?*

**When Yo' Pockets Hurtin'**

What's right or wrong with selling drugs because yo' pockets hurtin'? Of course all the rich Caucasian, upper class, white collar, suburban folks gonna say its wrong sellin' drugs. But what do they know they get money from inheritance?

They already have money to begin with and the only problems they got to worry about is if their grandmother or kids babysitter not doing their job right. Shhh most of the kids get a brand new car waitin' for them when they turn 16. Then when your pockets hurtin' so bad they bleedin'. What's so wrong with sellin' dope to fill them pockets, put food on your table, shoes on your feet, clothes on your back. What's so wrong?

Shhh, what's so wrong with fillin' yo' pockets when no jobs wanna hire minorities, who's been arrested, kicked out of school, and listen to music that most rich white folks don't like? Shhh, the truth is them rich white folks will never understand.

**-Big Samoa, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: We feel what you're saying when you feel that your opportunities are limited and that other people have more than you have, but if you keep looking at what everyone else has, then you can never be happy. Point being — there's always someone else who has more. What's wrong with struggling a little? What's wrong with working hard to get your money? Stop feeling sorry for yourself and start working hard to get what you want! You'll be much happier and more content in the end.*



## Days

In my life I saw so many days past.  
So many dark nights.  
So many rainy days.  
So many snowfalls.  
So many deaths when time past away.  
Day in day out hard time past within.  
Days when I walked this earth I felt like I had no friends.  
Family betrayed family.  
Friends turn on friends.  
That was just a learning experience  
it will happen again.  
Keep your enemy close as well as your friend.  
With that I'm going to leave you for now.  
Holla at the GHOST and I'll put it down.

**-Ghost, Virginia**

**From The Beat:** It's a heavy mood you lay on us here. All this matter-of-fact, all this "learning experience" in loss, and loss of trust. When you say "it will happen again," what do you have in mind? What do you envision for the future—YOUR future—that will be different, that will be POSITIVE for you and the people you love?

## These are desperate measures.

## Desperate Measures

I remember way back when I was drunk off of gin and juice, rolling around with my homies all over the place in a stolly, not even trippin' off of the cops, until I saw sirens yelling, "Stop!" So what could I do? Get away, or be writing to you? I obviously knew what I was facing, so I hit the gas without premeditation.

Next thing that I know, the peddle is on the flo' and my homie is hollering in my ear something like "Turn right here!" So, I break down the clutch to slow down just enough. Now I'm back on a straightaway, kickin' gears to avoid jail today. Then I take another right. Now the cops are outta sight! So, the next thing on my mind: Jump out of the car on one time. I hopped out while it was rolling with enough juice to break to Oakland.

I was striking like crazy, amazed that the trees hadn't made me lazy. Just then, I looked over my shoulder. "Oh crap! The rollers!" Now, I hit another gear like I've been a track star for years. Now they're losing more ground and I'm on my side of town, so I run through a house, unnoticed like a mouse.

Then, right out the other end, I see the uso Ben. He said, "Run in my house." I did it without a doubt. I was gone on the boys' because I was clever. Damn! These are desperate measures.

This is a true story that happened in the city by the projects! Much love to Ben!

**-Castor T, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** Clever use of rhyme! Sounds like one helluva adventure. What would have happened if you didn't get away? What was the worst that could have happened? Do you always wanna take risks with your life? Where do you see yourself in five years and do you think the lifestyle you're live today might have an impact on your future plans? Have you learned anything from this experience?

## I Wish

I wish I were at home with my family. I also wish that I would not have done what I did to put myself in the situation that I'm in now. I wish I would have made better choices in my life. I wish I had my father in my life while I was growin' up, or even now, just so that I can have someone to put me in check when I needed it, and help my mom out, take some of the stress off of her back, and to have someone to help me protect my sisters 'cause I can't always be around.

I also wish that I could be out with my baby's mother so that I could be there to help her when she needs me, or to drive her to work so that she can relax. I wish I could be out before my child is born, so that I can be there every step of the way in my child's life. I want to be there for my child like my mom is for me. I don't want my child to go through what I went through. I don't want my child to know how it feels to not have a father, and grow up feeling left out, or feel like he/she did something wrong 'cause his/her dad was never there.

**-Lil' Vell, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** Kids are a big responsibility and most people don't think like that, a big reason why the world is so messed up! We can tell that if you put your all into it — you will be a good father and future husband. What kind of lessons do you want to instill in your child? What do you think will be the hardest part about being a young father? What can you do so that you won't have to come to jail anymore? What do you need to give or give up? How can you build a nice future for your kids?

## The Drama Flowing River Of Wishes

The night that I returned to a hell unknown was like living in a room with thorns three inches away from everywhere that you turn, and the beds that we lay on even burn like fire. I wish a holy "wave" just swept me out of this place to Camp. I'm starting to become the "King of the Damned."

Four walls can tear a lion apart if needed, without all the taming and bleeding. Two things that I know is learning and leading. Failing to abide by these is so stupid. My mind seems so strong that it seems impossible to be influenced by crime when I should've learned my lesson the first few times. Line after line, I told myself to come together like clouds and precipitate the hate and feelings that are deep inside. Cluttered thoughts block positive things that I am supposed to do. No more drinking, smoking, selling dope, and hanging with the wrong crew.

Dues are being paid, rules being laid, and prayers being prayed. Jesus Christ is the first, last, and only way to get this to come true. From me to you, God bless America and God bless you. Things get hard and I can't get money fast enough legally. I call to God for Him to show me a better way, but all signs point to the dope man to front me a bundle. On my knees, when evil is done and God hasn't got his praise, is a puddle of bloody tears.

Stress is as deadly as a serial killer with a machete at a summer camp. Closing is always pain. The ending always changes, but me, I will never be the same, or "sane."

**-Sebastian, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** It is going to be hard to make it legally when all you're surrounded by is negative options. How hard do you think it will be to break away from the things that hold you down? What can you do to stay focused on the positive things and get rid of the negative ones? Why do you think that you'll never be the same or sane? How can you hold on to your sanity in such a crazy place? Lastly, stop stressin' and take some control of your life! You have mad skills as a writer. Get serious Sebastian!

## Brown Pride

Brown pride. The very sense of my life. The pride that flows through my veins and keeps my heart pumping. The burn I felt when that ink splattered my arms. This is my courage. This is Brown pride, being Chicano in this messed up life gets me going to dead ends, but that Brown Pride on the back of my arms reminds me to keep strivin' and to never "tap out" by any means.

That Brown Pride that us Chicanos use is to conduct ourselves as professionals and to look out for one another. See, livin' in this lifestyle, you can't let them rival wars go too far, so we gotta stick together. This is the choice I made. Brown Pride.

**-Shorty, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Out of curiosity, why did you get the tattoo on your arms? Did getting your tattoo change what you thought about yourself or what others thought about you? Why do you think people get tattooed up in general? What is this cause that you're so down far? When you say "Brown pride" — does that also mean keeping yourself out of jail?*

## My Dying Aunt

I have an aunt dying with  
some kind of cancer  
I feel so bad but yet I  
barely even know her  
I feel so sad and yet I  
can't even help her  
All I can do is write  
her.

**-Lil Mike, Virginia**

*From The Beat: You capture a sense of helplessness that suggests your connections to family that are crucial to everybody. When you write, what will you say to your aunt? Will you give her hope that she will see you once more?*

## About Me

When I ditched school it was all about me  
When I drank and smoke it was all about me  
When I hung around the bad crowds it was all about me  
When I packed a heat it was all about me  
When I stole that car it was all about me  
Now that I'm locked up, who gets punished?  
Me, and all the people that care about me  
If I could do it over I'll start thinking about others,  
Such as my brothers, sister and most important my mother

**-Timothy, Maricopa/Durango, Arizona**

*From The Beat: Good writing and even better thinking. We at The Beat think you hit the nail on the head. In any situation you come across, there is always more than one person involved. How are you going to make sure that when you get out you'll remember it isn't just about you?*

## Save The World

I wish I were a hero, a God, so I could save or rescue the world, and make it heaven and turn every evil to a good heart. I wish I were at home, sweet home, and at a normal high school, and at a normal high school, gettin' ready for football practice, and coming home from an exciting job, but that one could happen when I get out.

And if I could ever get rich in the future, legally, I might just help some people, and live with a happy family, (wife and kids), in peace.

**-Larry, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: How can you start making a difference in the world? Do you think change starts with you? You know, each week that you write you're making a difference in at least one person's life because many people who can't express themselves, get lost in your writing because they feel the same like you.*

**I wish I wouldn't have  
started selling drugs  
I wish there wasn't any  
violence in the world.**

## Start Over

I wish I were at home because I miss my mom and dad. I wish that I wouldn't have committed the crime that I did. I wish I would have listened to my grandma and stayed in the house.

Mostly, I wish I could start, just start my whole life over, and go to school everyday, and become successful in life. I wish I wouldn't have started selling drugs. I wish there wasn't any violence in the world.

**-Elijah, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: When you get out, what do you think you need to do differently so that you don't jeopardize your future? How can you make your parents proud? How can you make your future better than your past?*

## 1 Wish...

I wish I was at home  
I wish that I wasn't here  
I wish that I didn't have to go to a group home  
I wish that I didn't have to say there for a year  
I wish that I could see my baby mama  
I wish that I could be with my homies  
I wish that I could be in a real bed  
I wish I didn't have to go to court  
I wish I could leave  
I wish I could be on my block  
I wish I could see my sister and mom  
I wish I knew were my dad is  
I wish I could feel the touch of a gentle, young lady  
But as long as I keep wishing,  
I know this stuff ain't going to come true!  
So, why wish?

**-Quince, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Wishing isn't gonna make your wishes come true — you've gotta work hard to attain your dreams and goals. When you are released, what do you need to change so that the futures of you and your child can be bright? How can you make it so that you won't ever come back to Juvenile Hall?*

## Everyday

Does someone or somebody understand me and my everyday struggle? It's not just about what most think it is, most struggle to live day by day, some struggle to go through the little petty shhh that goes on etc. To most it ain't a struggle; it's just a setting that takes place in your life, to me that's half of what it is.

Some will rather be buried than to endure the pain and misery that has taken place in my life, 'cause that's how I felt a lot of the times on different occasions. Everyday it's the same; it never changes. The same things still take place; it's just that my thoughts change like the sun. But where I feel I'm at — it ain't no sunshine it's all darkness and rain and I feel like I'm smothered by my own pain.

Nothing's behind me 'cause I got it off my chest so the past is a wrap I'm stuck in the present, 'cause I'm not a fortune teller so I can't predict what tomorrow will bring, or the future; if there will even be one, but everyday starts inside of me.

Everyday it changes. No hurt, no pain then it comes runnin' full speed and wrecks into my good feeling and turns them back into bad... and this takes place everyday.

**-Lil' Rocky, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** We all are bound to feel emotional pain — that's what separates us humans from animals. Pain is okay as long as you are able to deal with it in a mature manner. Plus, pleasures wouldn't be so sweet without pain. How do you deal with your pain? How can you make your pain become your strengths rather than your weakness? That's what Tupac did, ya feel us? He turned his tragedy into triumph by altering it into music.

## La Calle

All my friends are on dead-end streets  
Some locked up and some knocked off their feet

I'm sure you can't win

Living this life of sin

We've all seen it again and again

And we continue to do it then

We all need to learn

Or we will crash and burn

We all need to turn our lives around

If not we will end up six feet under ground

**-Orlando, Maricopa/Durango, Arizona**

**From The Beat:** Orlando, you bring words of wisdom to this Beat. You should use that wisdom to reach out to your friends and be a positive role model for them. Step up and be a leader, and you will see the positive changes that come into your life, and hopefully, theirs.

## Some People Think It's Wrong

I really don't think it's nothing really wrong with selling drugs. I sell drugs but some people think that it's poison you selling to them. But where I come from almost everybody sell drugs so somebody got to give them the dope. And another reason I got to sell drugs is 'cause don't nobody do nothing for me.

I ain't got no daddy. My mom just got a roof over my head. My sister used to buy my clothes and shoes but as I got older she stopped, so that's when I got out there and started doing my thang and started goin' to jail. But I'm still gon' go back and do the same thing 'cause that's what I got to do. I'm just livin' it. That's all I got is me and the 'hood family. That's what I live by.

**-Lil' G, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** We see the desperation in the words you write. But remember, there's nothing wrong with struggling a little. What's wrong with a little sweat off your back? When you earn something it feels better than when you are handed something. We suggest that you pick a new career 'cause the dope game is taking our young ghetto teens down a dead end path. Look at yourself now, and tell us why you think the outcome will be any different in the future.

## Thinking I Was Safe

I walked the streets

With my gun

Thinking

I was safe

But

Then people

Started to say

Stuff so people

Started to shoot

At them and me

So I started to

Run until I got shot

In my leg so I

Had to shoot them

Back in self defense

So if I was you

Stay away

From guns

They will get

You killed

So stay away

From guns

On the streets

RIP

**-Craig, Maricopa/Durango, Arizona**

**From The Beat:** Hey Craig, powerful message. We agree that you shouldn't carry guns because most of the time you still end up getting hurt whether it be with a weapon or incarceration or both. How do you think we can protect ourselves without using violence against others?

## My Father

In my life so far, I have always known that my father loves and cares about me. Up until lately, I have never understood how much my father cares.

Since I have been locked up, my father's heart has been broken; you see I am his only son. We spent time together, but not enough. That night my car crashed, my father could have lost his son. There are so many things that we would miss out on.

I love my father he will be a big part of my life and I will no longer take that for granted.

**-David, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** Why don't you send this piece to your father? It would put a smile on his face especially right now. Wanna make him glow? Get out and stay out of Juvenile Hall!





## 1 Messed Up

I messed up by running away from my grandfather's house,  
I messed up by getting a warrant,  
I messed up by leaving my family,  
But I am in here for sometime.  
But I hope I don't get three years like my mom.  
They say just like father like son,  
But it is like mom and son,  
Not father like son,  
So I am not going to mess up just like my mom.  
I wish I was home.  
I wish my mom was home, too.  
I wish my sis and bro were home.  
I wish we all could be together  
And no one would bother us.

**-Octavio, Maricopa/Durango, Arizona**

*From The Beat: Octavio, it must be painful to face each day knowing your mother is in prison instead of at home. We recognize that you may also feel angry at times about this reality. We encourage you to talk with someone about your feelings. What can you learn from your mother's choices that will empower you to stay free? Can anyone out there help you and your family? Dad? Uncle? Auntie? Try to reach out to someone who cares about you and your future and will guide you in living a life of long-term freedom.*

## Poem Of Strength

To all the people in the Hall  
I'm writing this to all I know and don't know up in the Hall.  
I know this shhh is hard but soon you can make it past these walls.  
With all the keys clickin' and all the fights that spread,  
Pray to "God" for wisdom and he'll give you the right head.  
Don't trip of shhh talkers and people who funk,  
Just continue your program so you can get out this dump.  
I'm writing this to y'all people so you can keep ya head up,  
Because I felt like you felt and I made it out alive.  
So to end this piece on a perfect note, in "God" you should trust  
And please don't forsake what I've wrote...  
To all the people in the Hall

**-Ashton150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Did you turn to God when you were incarcerated or were you a believer before this experience? Why do you think a lot of folk turn to God while they're locked up? When you are released, make sure that you keep God in your life 'cause you need Him in your life always and not just when the weather is rainy.*

## 1 Wish

I wish I was out of jail, home with my mamma  
I wish I was thinking like I'm thinking now,  
before I did the crime I did.  
I wish I was given less time, in jail.  
I wish I was going to school, when I was in school.  
I wish I was out of here so I can start a better life.  
I wish I was choosing the right choices, at first.

**-Tyrisha, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Tyrisha, the thing you gain from these mistakes is, knowledge. It seems like you've learned a few valuable lessons. Sometimes it takes a little suffering in order to start making better decisions. You are a smart girl, when given the opportunity, we know that you will step up and make the right decisions.*

## Pops

What's cracking, this Yung Lazy and this right here is 'bout my father figure. My father figure is my pops; he's a veteran from my spot. Even though he never taught me how to read and shhh like that, he taught me something more important — where I come from, street smarts, I grew up early soakin' up game from him and his patnas, most of them are dead or in jail now but I remember everything they did, from moving weight, to robbin' and smokin' foos.

He always did his shhh slick an' most of the time he got away wit' it. He taught me how to drive, crease my clothes, cook, and shoot, fight and to stand up for what I believe in. Expect the unexpected. I look up to him because if I would have never soaked up that game I would have been dead or in jail for life.

He taught me to respect the OG and to never let anybody get me down. So to all in the Hall, CYA, group homes, Camp, ROP and anywhere else. Sometimes the good thing could be bad for you and the bad things be good so make the best of your situation. Keep your heads up for them better days.

**-Yung Lazy, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Well, newflash — you are in jail right now so obviously your game must not be fool-proof. You ever trip that sometimes the game you think you have is what gets you in so much trouble. He who thinks he knows everything will never learn anything new. The game isn't beneficial if it lands you in the Hall every time you play. Now truly make your pops proud, get yourself together and stay out of the system.*

## I Don't Think About It

I was brought in this world with lots of good values. My mind is on war at times, but it's with me. The life I live, I can only live one day at a time. What I do is wrong, but don't think about it.

See, I am in love with myself and what life has allowed me to have, I am basically legal and I have to have a different state of mind because bigger and better things will come along. I was given something that almost no one has, but in order to be found, I will have to work hard to find where it stands on my life. At times, I think, "Will it last, and/or cut me off?" I hope I will be ready for what being an adult has and place it has for me. I ain't never been scared, but it ain't a good feeling. It's a bad one.

Well, life has a place for everyone, so I will be a good place and a nice state of mind, so for all y'all, be prepared for your second stage of life, life after the first stage.

**-Anonymous, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: This world has given us all some good, some bad. How you use what you got, will determine where your life is at. If you understand, the things you do that are wrong, why do you choose to not think about it? If you love yourself, you will be conscience of the decisions you make. Look at yourself now. You are in the Hall. Life has a place for you, but you, only you have the power to find that place.*

## See What I See

I only see what I can see.

See, it seems like to me that a lot of people try to make  
life something  
that it should not be.

See, I see what I see, but that's just me.

See, half of the time, I see good things,  
but it seems to be that good things are just not for me.

See, we know what we are, but not what we may be.

See, it's obvious that a lot of people are tryin' to be  
something that they really are not meant to be.

See, there are good times and there are bad times.

Impossible is nothing.

See, life is so simple, but we make it so hard.

Funny faces in different places are left with no traces.

Such a beautiful day, but such a terrible night.

See, what's the point in a fight if it ain't about rights.

The grass is green, the sky is blue.

I'm here in the life, but I'm thinking of who?

**-Cuttey, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Nice flow. You see what you see, but that's all you should see. You have an interesting perspective, thoughts that are collective. But we want to know how you think. When you take time to observe others moves, but what are the choices that you choose? Who are you thinking of? Hopefully yourself, plus others that you love. You see what you see, because that's who you are, but you can choose a positive attitude and let it take you far.*

## I Wish I Was...

I wish I was an intelligent beautiful black young women who is a successful sports-therapist having a practice of my own.

I will take care of my daughter. She will be a 4.0 GPA honor student, at a top notch, doing her thing. I will be riding a phat Lexus on twenty-fours with a dumb sound system. Also I will be an educated master-degree female, getting this money for my baby and my brother.

He will be doing his college thing, learning his classes for the African-American culture, to help his community get out of this violent hood.

I wish this would come true, but I know if I have faith and believe in God, this will come true. If I wouldn't wish, and achieve this dream, I wouldn't have to wish this dream.

RIP Adi, Mami loves you

**-Shavallier, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Shavallier, you ARE an intelligent black young woman. Becoming successful is up to you. You have the power to become all those things you wish for. If you want to be a sports-therapist, study sports-therapy. You have faith in God, and you have the desire to make all these wonderful things happen. What you need now is a plan. Don't be afraid to ask for help. Ask your counselors, ask people who care about you, tell them about your dreams, do the research. You can achieve this dream. Go! Make a future for yourself! Get that Lexus on twenty-fours... Go! Go! Go!*

**I wish I had a  
house for myself  
and my mom.**

## Lost

When I arrived here in juvenile hall, I was lost. This was my first time coming to this place and I was scared and desperate.

I came to this place thinking I would get out and go home in a couple of days. Well, days turned to months. Going through all this has almost had me at my breaking point. Alone in my room, without any friend. My family is gone and I can't touch my girlfriend. Knowing that I can hear these people on the phone, for about five months, makes me feel empty, alone, and scared.

About two weeks ago, I was alone in my cell and I felt like I was going to snap. Everything had finally built up inside of me, but no matter how much pain or agony I had, I always had Jesus to tell all my problems and share all my love. He was there the whole time, day and night, every step of the way.

Knowing this gives me a sense of welcome in this horrible place. It just depends on where we look, or how bad we want it. I once heard someone say, "We believe in air, but can we see it?" Well, why not believe in God? He can save us all. I thank him every morning when I wake up for everything in my life, for all of my pain, and all of my troubles. No matter what, I know that everything happens for a reason, so I thank the Lord for everything!

That is what I do when I become desperate; thank him. No matter what the circumstances are, I am thankful. In doing this, I am finding that my time here isn't as bad as it seems. It can be that way for all of us. We just have to look.

**-Df, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Wow! D-Frank, you are a positive voice, surrounded by negativity. Thank God for that. When you understand everything in perspective, you can be grateful for the bad times as well as the good. It's the bad times that really make us who we are. We are thankful that you choose to remain patient and thankful that you are sharing this powerful message with us.*

## I Wish I Was

I wish I was a great person.

I wish I had everything that's necessary.

I wish I had God with me.

I wish I had a family.

I wish I would be at home.

I wish I had my lil' sisters and my dad.

I wish I had a house for myself and my mom.

I wish I could give my mom everything for all them years I put  
her thru hell.

I wish when I get out I can go buy me a pack of Newports and I  
wish I can see my man.

I wish I had a good fun life.

I wish I was someone.

I wish I get out.

I wish a group home can just come and get me.

I wish time can go by and me doing what's right.

I wish I can be good and be someone in life.

I wish, I wish, I wish!

**-Mocha, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Mocha, wishing is the first step to achieving all these things. You have the desire in you. Now you need to go down the list and decide what you need to do. You want to be a great person, well what does it mean to you, to be a great person? You want everything necessary, what's necessary? You goals are all within reach. You just have to know which direction to reach out for them.*

## I Wish I Could have Been There

I wish I was there,  
I wish I was there for your first birthday,  
I wish I was there for your first word,  
I wish I could have been there  
to hold you when you woke up  
in the middle of the night  
crying,  
I wish that I could have been there to see you  
make you first step and start walking,  
I wish I could have seen the way your face lit up  
when you saw all the fireworks go off.  
But lil' nephew auntie will be home soon,  
to be with you all.  
Man, I wish I could turn back the hands of time and been  
there to see it all.  
I love you Daniel  
Love always,

**-Crystal, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Crystal, your love for your nephew is beautiful. Although you cannot go back in time to be there for the things you missed out on, you can be there for him in the future. You can be there for his next b-day, the next fireworks show; he's got his whole life ahead of him. He is lucky to have someone like you to share it with.*

## I Wish I Never Did What I Did

I wish I was out of here because I could be with my friends right now. But stupid me had to get in trouble and had to go to the hall.

I miss my friends and family and the only thing I can do about it is nothing. I get phone calls but they're not that long. It's different from when you're here and when you're at home. I got to understand that I got myself here and I have made the choices to get myself out. And one of them is not to get write-ups. They take your fun time away, if you don't listen. It's just a lot when you're in the Hall. It's not a place to be, you have to stay in your room, and it's just not a place to be.

I never want to come back, I hate the food, and the girls are just too much. Some of the staff are cool.

All I want to do is go home. I'm never coming back here and I give that my word. If do break it, I just don't know.

**-Ja'laya, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: That is a good idea; while you are in the Hall, start making smart decisions. This can only help, so by the time you get out you will be better prepared. Good for you!*

## Changing Back The Hands Of Time

I wish I was a person who could change back the hands time. If I could turn back the hands of time, all of the things that have happened to me wouldn't have happened. I would be the happiest kid in the world. I know one thing for sure, this is that I wouldn't be in here.

People that I saw die, sad feelings I felt, tears I shed, none of those things would have happened.

**-Rodrigo B2, SF/YGC**

*From The Beat: What an honest, sad piece of writing, Rodrigo. We know that many, many people feel this same way but rarely admit it. What can you do to build a future where you won't want to erase so much of what's happened?*

## Beat Within

I think everyone needs to start taking their lives a lot more seriously! Every day it's getting harder and more young kids and young adults are starting to go to jail more and not realizing that time doesn't wait for no one.

That's why I learn a lot of lessons, and I'm tired of making the same mistakes. You don't have no friends, and I have to prove to myself, so that I can be successful. Because when it all comes down to it, no one will love you like yourself!

That's why it is important to take responsibility of yourself, because whoever your mother or father and guardian is, they won't be here forever! So when you wake up every morning, thank God for any good opportunity. Take it as an advantage in life. You don't want to end up like a bum on the street!

Respect yourself and listen to the wise, not the weak! And I know sometimes you don't want to listen, but it's always good to learn positive ways to deal with our young lives!

**-Marisa, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: You tell it like it is Marisa. Great advice. Do you take your life seriously? What does that mean when you choose to take yourself serious? What does it mean to respect yourself? What advice has the wise offered you? What are the lessons that you are learning? Share with us, wise one.*

## it is important to take responsibility of yourself

## The Ghost Of My Room

I think the ghost of the past lived in a jungle

Bubble! Bubble! Bubble!

I think he was a young sav'

Who couldn't stay out of trouble

His title must have been hawg

'Cause it's all over my wall

I don't think he got released

He must be in a different Hall

Maybe everyday he got blunted

Smoked 'bout 200

Is he from it?

Is my room haunted?

To someone who's been there and done it

He probably stayin' tiltin' a bottle of drank

Give a ...What! Was his motto

He probably needs Alcoholics Anonymous

He must have been about seventeen years old

And left about a month ago

I think he was Black

Lightweight cat

And one of his homie's name is Tip Toe

I learned this all from his taggin'

I think he needs to change his life

Stop thuggin' and muggin'

And try to do shhhh the right way

**-Young Tip, Marin**

*From The Beat: Really imaginative poem, Young Tip. Your writing is getting to be so amazing! You go! You certainly can sum up the young man who may have preceded you in your room. Does the you young man who resided there before you remind you of yourself a little?*



## I Wish I Was A Better Man

I wish I was a better man. Better man to everything, mostly to my family. My father left me at a young age, like around 12 or 13.

Also, I was the oldest boy in the family, so I should have taken care of the family and been a good role model to my younger brother. Instead, I became a person I didn't want to be, out in the streets with friends, instead of kicking it with my family, smoke, drink, do bad stuff in front of my brother.

So there's a lot of things I could have done better. I should have finished school so I could get a better job, so I could feed my baby that's about to come out, my family and my girl, so I think about that at night. I wish I was a better man. Can you?

**-E B2, SF/YGC**

*From The Beat: What a sincere, important piece of writing. Wishing you were a better person is a good start, and figuring out how you can do this is the next step. Would it be possible for you to go to school while you're working, even if it's just one class at a community college? What kind of career would you like to have? Keep writing and using your time in the Hall to make a plan to become the person you have it in your heart and mind to be.*

**We only get one life,  
one chance,  
and one death**

## Silver Daggers

I'm in here for having a concealed weapon, and having an illegal weapon (dagger).

The day started off with me putting two sharp daggers in my backpack. Then, after putting on my Dickies, jersey, hat, and Chrome Air Force Ones, I went off to school. The night before, I told someone to hold them for me. I gave him the daggers until I went to the fair, 'cause POs come to school and check up whenever.

I got to the fair and put the daggers on my leg with tape and went right in. I was working there and I saw a homie from Juvy and he said to meet up at 3:00 PM. So we did, and found more homies. We were hella deep. I'm not in a gang, but I just kick it with them. So they saw rivals and the rivals didn't say anything, so they left.

We went to the other side of the fair and kicked it there. When I was sitting down, my shank fell out, so I jumped down with it and the crew surrounded me, so no one could see it. But one fool saw it and snitched. Long story short... I'm in here for one more month, then I'll go on the bracelet for 180 days. No friends in the crib, or none outside (except school) in my life.

But I didn't think about what if I stabbed someone. It would have been CYA for me. Just a few seconds and my life would have been jumpsuit for a long time. I'm out.

**-California, Marin**

*From The Beat: You are really lucky you didn't stab someone, California. First of all, someone could be dead, or seriously or permanently wounded, because of you. Or you could have been jumped, beaten up, stabbed, or facing some serious CYA time. Or you could be dead. What good can come of carrying daggers, or any other weapon? And passing off those daggers can only get your homie in trouble, if he gets busted with them. What will you do differently in the future so that you don't set yourself up for a terrible future?*

## A Lifelong Problem

On January 3, 1988 at about 7:15 AM, there was a baby born in Cook County hospital at a premature two pounds, three ounces. He came out fine, nothing wrong with him till he got to know wrong from right. His mother tried her hardest to raise him, but it seems nothing would work.

At the age of 7, he was pierced with a bullet in his shoulder. After that, he still didn't listen. He kept on being hardheaded and doing what he wanted to do.

When he reached 12, he caught his first case, a robbery charge. They let him free. After that, he caught another case, this time a dope case. His PO asked for a placement change, he said no one could control him. They sent him to a group home. He ran and didn't get caught till was about 16. This time it was a gun case. Now they want to send him to the Y. That boy was me.

**-Young Samm B2, SF/YGC**

*From The Beat: Good writing, Young Samm. You do a good job of describing your history, but we wonder what you feel about the life you've led so far. Why do you think you haven't you listened to your mom? Are you as out-of-control as people think, and if so, why? Are you happy about going to the Y or are you starting think about checking yourself? Please tell us more.*

## Crazy Girl

Smile

Laugh

Sing

Go crazy

That's what I do in my room

I'm so sick and tired of being in a cube

I don't like people seeing me in the bathroom

When I sing, my songs are mostly about love and my goals

There are times when I laugh

Because I recall good times I had back home

I look in the mirror and I smile

Because I know I have a great life waiting for me

I hope I don't get a concussion

When I bang my head against the wall

Because if I do

I hope I remember what my life was like

We only get one life, one chance, and one death

This crazy girl is gonna get her act together

Make her dreams and goals come true

So remember my name

I love you

You know who I'm talkin' to?

Myself

**-Ampelia, Marin**

*From The Beat: Wonderful poem, Ampelia. What is the best life you can dream of, that you can create for yourself and those you hold dear? How will you obtain all of your goals? You have a beautiful optimism and your hope will inspire others to see that their lives are pretty much up to them, just like yours is up to you. Sounds like your future is in good hands, yours! You go!*

**Just a few seconds and  
my life would have been  
jumpsuit for a long time**

## I'm Sorry

I'm back in the Hall, thinking about my beautiful girlfriend. While I look at the wall, it's hard being stuck here when a girl you're in love with is missing you and loving you. I want to talk to her, to express how much I love her, and how I will change my life around for her.

I've been here for thirty-five days, and I'm gaining emotions and feelings that were never there. I've been gaining these feelings, and they make me feel in a way that I've never felt.

I feel in heaven when I am with my girlfriend, or even think about her.

I'll be out soon, and will spend that precious time with her. I'll continue being sober, 'cause it's best that I do when I'm released. Alcohol is makin' me go nowhere and makes me disrespectful.

So, girl, if you're reading this, I love you and can't wait to treat you like the sweetie you are. To my girl, Kajja, I'm sooo sorry for the things in the past. I'll be out soon!

**-Silly J, Marin**

**From The Beat:** You'll be doing yourself a huge favor if you give up alcohol now. Are you worried about being able to do it? Some people struggle with alcohol their whole lives. You don't want to have to do that. Can you give it up for yourself as well as your girlfriend? We hope so! Stay strong.

## Sad Times For Sad Eyes

Sad times for La Sad Eyes

Time to rise

To these bad times I despise

Catch my loneliness by surprise

After so many tries

Tired of looking at this world

Through these wet eyes

These sad eyes

Tear-stained face

Wanting so much to be in his sweet embrace

Feels like everything in this world is a race

I know I got to find out how to slow the pace

And fill my heart's empty space

Warm and safe

With this amazing grace

**-Sad Eyes, Marin**

**From The Beat:** What was so important that you risked being away from your man Sad Eyes? What is your life like on the outs? Do you go to school, have a part-time job? Do you have a family that supports you and encourages you to do well? Is something making you sad besides being locked up, or is something else really bothering you? Can you talk to anyone, to get some help and advice?

## Bad Truck Trip

What's up The Beat? I came here on June 28th for my first time. I got caught in Hayward for the possession of a concealed weapon, which was a gun.

I was driving in my mom's truck when I got pulled over with my friend on the street. I got pulled over because of my God's symbol hanging off the mirror. Task pulled me over and asked me for my license, and I gave it to them. They asked my friend and me to step out of the car for no reason, which we did. Then they illegally searched my mom's truck when I told them that they couldn't. That's how they found the gun, but police officers these days are racist and they think they know what you do and stuff just by what you're wearing.

The cops that pulled me over thought I was a gang-banger, which I'm not, and kept arguing with me that I was when I'm not one. So to me, police officers aren't doing their jobs right because they're always attacking teenagers for no reason most of the time. Some officers are racist and just try to get you in jail because of your religion or because of the color of your skin. I think that's wrong.

**-Rifa, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** Why do you think some cops abuse their power? Why do you think some of them assume things about young folks of color? If you were a police officer, do you think you'd target a specific group or would you treat all cats equally? Have you ever ran across a good cop that abided with the law and didn't abuse his power? They are out there. Are question to you, what is your God's symbol that got you pulled over?

## Don't Know Why

I don't know why I chose to live this life

Fourteen years old, sleepin' outside on lonely nights

I thought weed was the way out

But when I came down off my high, all I had was doubt

Stole my money to get happy again,

only to find a new path to begin

It all started when I was livin' the life of a criminal,

committin' crime

(To be continued)

**-E, Marin**

**From The Beat:** Why are you sleepin' outside? Won't your family let you come home? Do you wanna go home? What would it take for you to give up your life of crime? What new life would you replace it with?

## Have You Ever

Have you ever done something wrong that you know that you weren't supposed to do and you deliberately went out and did it anyways? Or had something positive told to you that you should have acknowledged, but you just went and did the complete opposite? These are the kind of things that I would like to overcome. I'll try my hardest!

**-Josh, San Luis Obispo**

**From The Beat:** Oooh, those are the worst feelings. So, teach us how to overcome making those bad decisions. Do you stay away from the people, places, things that make you want to do the wrong thing? Think hard before making a decision? Live under a rock?

**police officers aren't doing their jobs right  
because they're always attacking teenagers for  
no reason**

## Feel Me!

You feel you know me,  
But you only see what I show  
Down for earnin' stripes,  
But I'm a man, so I reap what I sow  
Time is steady tickin' and the day goes on  
So I stay solid, day in, and day out, tryna keep my  
mind strong  
To keep myself sane  
I blow grapes to keep my brains blown  
This ain't my place, and I'm, ready to go home  
You gotta feel me  
We've been standin' still for so long,  
I'm ready to move on...  
Tilt a couple bottles for my folks that are gone  
But now, I miss my boo  
I hate sleeping alone  
I miss puttin' on saucy fits  
With a couple drops of cologne  
Being lazy off "BO," but off pills to be on  
Up all hours of the night  
Includin' the next morn'  
But let me quit all this reminiscing  
'Cause I 'm not leavin' any time soon  
For a minute, I'm stuck like air in a balloon.

**-Emmy-Boe, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** It's sad that your missing out on so much, dying and fiending for your woman's touch. When you are released, how can you make sure that you don't take your freedom for granted again? Can you make the choice to play to win? Do you take any responsibility for what bought you in the Hall? Can you live a legit life when you free yourself from those white walls? We see the potential in you to do well, but you're the one who has to walk the walk.

**Don't pray to God for a  
release: Pray for wisdom,  
knowledge, and forgiveness.**

## Where When Why

Well, shhh, where do I start? I'm kinda head trapped at this moment. I'm going through a lot of crap right now, but then I read The Beat Within and read some of the poems in it I count all my blessings. Well, I'm sitting in Camp Snoopy (JSC) right now eating cookies. I think the only reason why I like anything about this place is the food. Other than that, screw this shhh. I want to leave, well, I guess everyone does.

Well, I have been in here 25 days and I'm already hella over it. All the girls try to dog and talk shhh. Whatever, it's not worth my time. Well, I have to sit in here 25 more days until I go to rehab and that really sucks, two months gone. Well, I'm going to rehab for 6 months and then a boot camp, Grizzly. I'm hella committed and can't wait to start my life. It's like I'm trying to keep up with the light that is almost going out, but I'm going to stay strong.

**-Stacy, San Luis Obispo**

**From The Beat:** Congratulations on getting accepted to Grizzly and the rehab. We wish you the best. Since you still have 25 more days, we're curious about how you plan to keep your light shining in Juvenile Hall. What ways do you keep the hope? Write about your future? Talk to your family about helping you reach your dreams? Read? Work out in your room?

## So Long

I'm going to a group home. I've been here so long. If it wasn't for the staff supporting me, I probably would have been gone. They took their time to help me out with my anger and my problems, especially to Mr. Battle. He's a great counselor/role model — thank you.

I've been in the Hall for ten months and now I'm going to a group home in Santa Rosa. I do hope that everything works out for me. I love to take it one day at a time, and thanks to The Beat Within for putting my pieces in the paper. Thanks and much respect to Dave Mohammed and David Inocencio. You'll hear from me again. My words to you all: Stay up and don't let negativity hold you down.

You can talk to staff to let them know how you feel. It relieves your anxiety. Don't pray to God for a release: Pray for wisdom, knowledge, and forgiveness.

Much respect to counselor Mr. Richardson because back in the days, I challenged him and he threw me down in A-Unit. I just want to thank him for being supportive, and telling me to be strong. That's it. Thank you staff and minors and Beat Within. Love always,

**-Ray, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** Are these counselors an inspiration for you to become a counselor one day? How do you keep a positive attitude when you're faced with hella negativity? Have you learned forgiveness through prayer and God? Does God also have a big impact on your life? Why or why not?

## Desperate

Desperate for Vicodin and some Mad Dog 20/20.

It didn't cost a lot of money,  
but it got my sense actin' funny.

I don't know what I'm doing.  
My mind is not in the right place.  
I shouldn't be driving right now.

I can't even feel my face.

Then again, what else is there to do  
when you're feeling this hyphee

I know God is protecting me,  
but the Devil is tryin' to smite me,  
so I step out the car and get my mind together  
tightly Wearing my black Dickies, T-shirt, and  
Cortez Nikes.

I walk down my block and holla at my homies.  
We start conversating and I pull out a pack of  
stogies.

You know I'm desperate to get out of here  
and will do nothin' to stop  
day dreaming about this  
'cause it was nothin' but a thought.

**-Lil' Gato, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** You can stop daydreaming about freedom and grab it. If you try hard enough and work at it — you can have it. Your dreams are wishes just waiting to come true, but freedom starts with you and only you know what to do. So stop talking about it and go get what you want so badly. Then you can earn your freedom and hopefully find a way to be happy.



## **Boog Money And Lil' Booda's Page**

### **Loving God**

you need to put  
god in your life  
life will be easier  
you'll always  
have someone  
looking out for you  
when times are hard

**-Lil' Booda, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat: With a strong heart and (God's) will to do right,  
when times get hard — you'll win the fight.**

### **Losing Someone You Love**

these street' is cold-hearted  
we lose our family  
and friend' to these street'  
but now they in a better place  
death is easy life is hard  
just don't forget the people you love  
r i p jeremee

**-Lil' Booda, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat: To paraphrase Jesus: Be in the street but not  
of the street. Rise above the street.**

### **Building My Trust Back**

you think i'm still cheatin'  
but i'm not  
i know i've disowned your trust  
now i don't want to hear all that fuss  
i know i've done wrong  
i wish i could take it back  
i'm feelin' bad in the hall  
listenin' to these slow songs  
i consider you my baby'momma  
even tho' we go thru' hella drama  
everybody ain't perfect  
we humans we make mistakes  
i want you to know that my love for you ain't fake  
i want us to build that happy family  
live a life you always wanted  
instead of me hidin' thangs  
and always frontin'  
baby — you my miss thang  
that's why i want you  
'cause i know you take care of everything

**-Young Sick, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat: It's a trip how those song lyrics fit perfectly when  
reality hits, hurtling you free from your fast-lane insanity. Then you  
see what's important, suddenly quick, and it isn't what you thought  
you had to deal with. Diagnosing the disease is the beginning of the  
cure, 'cause you can't start to heal, till the truth is revealed and you  
feel it, for sure.**

### **Streets**

times is hard on these streets  
scared to come out the house  
you think them ninjas go' have heat  
so you ninjas be cool out on these streets  
to the ninjas that gone rest in peace

**-Lil' Booda, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat: The dope game is no place to be, with every  
youngster packing heat.**

### **Desperate For Freedom**

only out fo' five months  
but even then  
i was a delinquent  
'bout my 'fetti  
puffin' on 'em blunts  
a t f / d e a / u s  
department of justice  
o p d raided the house  
couldn't run nowhere  
now i'm trapped like a mouse  
big bra lookin' at his third strike  
i got off easy as a juvenile  
it was almost like  
they pushed me off my bike  
i should've took the blame  
now i'm stuck here  
feelin' ashamed'  
my main squeeze trippin'  
'cause i'm in the hall  
i'm suppose' to take care  
of my bra's family  
now i'm in my own lil' fall  
i'm desperate now —  
tryin'a make a phone call  
what will happen to me  
who knows —  
but i can tell  
i'm'a get washed  
when they sentence me  
in san mateo county  
i can't even take care  
of my main squeeze  
and my brother's family  
i'm goin' crazy in here  
ready to cross the boundaries

**-Young Sick, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat: You were crazy out there, too, but under the delusion  
that everything was coo' — and now you see just how uncoo' it was,  
'cause the consequences cut like a buzz saw. But you need to stay  
clear that it didn't start with you being in here; it started with the  
'fetti chase, blunts and the instruments of the trade. And if your  
brother wasn't ready to change his ways, even your taking the blame  
wouldn't give him but a number of days. When you dig deep enough  
into reality's truth you'll see, the only way to help yourself and your  
girl and your brother's family, too — is to change your mentality.  
Cross that boundary!**

**big bra lookin' at his  
third strike  
i got off easy as a juvenile**

## Change the System

I wish it was no such thing as the system. All they worry about is making money off us and messing with our freedom. I think the system was made to ruin a lot of lives, just like they're doin' as I write this.

If it was up to me, I'd change the system up. I wouldn't completely change it, 'cause then the world would be upside-down; but I would be a lil' more lenient. That's my piece for this week. I hope you like it, or can relate to it!

**-Dante., 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** Tell us more about what you mean by a more lenient system, more lenient about what things? Petty crime? Drug/alcohol use? Violation of probation? Missed court dates? And what might a more lenient system do to motivate you to change, so you don't just keep messing up till things get drastic?

## Desperate For Fathers

Man, I know a lot of kids who are desperate for a father, and that's sad. I feel for people who don't have a father figure in their lives.

I have a cousin who doesn't have a father, and she's always talking about, "I wonder how my life will turn out if I had a father. Maybe I will go to college and stop rippin' an' running the streets and acting grown."

I feel for people who don't have a father.

**-Lil' Lloyd B1 SF/YGC**

**From The Beat:** You have a huge heart for others, Lil' Lloyd. That's partly why your writing is always insightful and empathetic (you can feel others' emotions.) Has your dad kept you from rippin' and running the streets? How has he helped you? Can your dad help your cousin who has no father? Maybe as an uncle, can he give her some strength and advice? We bet you, as her cousin, sometimes provide the fatherly role in her life. She's lucky to have you for

## A Very Desperate Situation

I'm currently in a very desperate time in my life, being incarcerated. I feel desperate when I have no control in my life. When I feel desperate, I usually keep to myself and think about how I can get out of my situation.

Sometimes I feel that there is no way out and that I'll be incarcerated all my life. My advice for people who are desperate is that they should stop and think about what their next move is instead of making a bad, desperate decision.

**-Abbas, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** So, what do you think will be your next move? How can you make sure that your next move is your best move? How can you gain a little control over your life?

## Free

I wish I were free.

I wish I could go home.

I wish for this nightmare to end.

I wish for people to stop judging me.

I wish for everyone to stop messing with me.

I wish for my family to be safe and for Allah to protect all of us.

**-Abbas, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** This is all up to you. You can't do horrible things and expect people not to judge you. We're all human and we tend to judge. Get your shhh straight and do well so people can judge you in a good way.

## Dante, Lil' Lloyd And Abbas' Page

### Mad At Myself!

This mess got me fed up. I'm so stressed out, I don't know what to do. The staff, the food, the fake ninjas in my face all the time! I'm tired of the waitin' process, sittin' in the Hall till yo' next court date.

I'm so fed up! And I'm mad at myself for puttin' myself back in this mess when I had a choice of bein' free, gettin' weekend passes, an' not stressin' as much. I'm really mad at myself the most 'cause I don't think about stuff till it's too late!

So here's some great advice to all — whatever program you got to do, just get that program done and out the way; and don't run 'cause you just puttin' yo'self deeper in the hole you was in when you started. That's game from one of your peers!

**-Dante, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** Everybody makes mistakes, but to keep repeating the same mistake over and over, is just plain crazy. Next time you're tempted to act on impulse — just stop! You don't have to think everything through every time, 'cause now you know that you need to stop yourself when you're all heated like that! Thanks for sharing your experience.

### Desperate To Get Out

I'm desperate to get out an' do the right things, get my life together and stop rippin' and runnin' the streets.

I'm desperate to stop acting like a kid, trying to be grown and runnin' with the big homies, trying to act hard and stayin' out all type of hours of the day. But for the most part, I'm desperate to get out and change my life. I'm desperate.

**-Lil' Lloyd B1 SF/YGC**

**From The Beat:** You're really imaginative and a good thinker, Lil' Lloyd. How do you want your life to change? What concrete steps will you take toward achieving your goal when you get out of here? Will your homies still hang with you if you don't run the streets with them? Can you accept it when they hang in the streets without you? Will you try to get your homies involved in your new life, so they can consider an alternative to the streets? Great luck, Lil' Lloyd.

### Nick

Currently, I've been in Juvenile Hall for eight months and I've seen a lot of people in the room that I'm currently in. I know some of them and I know what their crimes were. Some of them got straight up released, some got released to Camp, and most of them went to the Youth Authority.

My boy Nick was sent to Rita (County Jail) after he got tried as an adult. I knew his family and they were very nice people. Nick and I still keep in touch and currently he's facing 15 years — if convicted.

Sometimes I wonder who used to be in my room a year ago. I pray for my boy Nick and I hope he gets out soon so he can take care of his family.

**-Abbas, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** We're praying for your boy too. We have mad respect for Nick Floyd who has touched many lives through his writings in The Beat, just like you are doing tonight. We hope that you won't have to be facing forever for you to change. The time is now homie and we hope your religion will help you get your mind right.

## Jason's Page

### Three Dangerous Accidents

Here are three different accidents I've had in my life: when I was snowboarding and broke my leg, when I shattered my left kneecap, and when I went hiking and got bit by a fox.

When I went snowboarding in Lake Tahoe, my brother dared me to do a back flip off a ramp and I did. The first one landed perfectly and he said, "Do it again." When I did it, I landed wrong and broke my leg.

My brother and I were looking for a motor in a junkyard. Two bulldogs started chasing us. When we got to a fence, my brother hopped the fence and I hopped it after him and I looked back at the dogs and I came down too fast and a fence pipe stuck straight in my kneecap and shattered it and my brother carried me home. Then I went to the ER and got a metal kneecap put in.

When I went camping and I went for a hike, I found a baby fox in a bush. I picked it up and the mother came and saw me. She came up and bit me in the leg and ran off. I took the baby fox with me and my mom and step dad said I could keep it. My brothers and I took care of it and we had the fox for three years and then we let it go in its homeland. We called him Red, and I gave him milk when he was little and then we gave him meat when he was older. He lived a happy life with us and it was hard to say goodbye when I let him go.

My conclusion is, when you do something dangerous, remember to be careful.

**-Jason, Marin**

**From The Beat:** You seem fearless. All your experiences have a beautiful element to them, even if you hurt yourself in the process. Your love of life is wonderful and a joy to everyone around you. You've learned a lot in your young life. We hope you get out soon, go back to school and are reunited with your family.

### Open

Once more  
Can you open the door?  
For the heart?  
One for the heart  
One goes on  
To see  
Everything cannot be  
The way you  
Want it to be  
Help me understand  
You again  
I need you to hold my hand  
To look at me again  
To love me  
Like the way you used to  
Show me the way to understand  
This day  
To show me the light  
To understand  
To live the night  
I need you now  
To hold me  
To look in my eyes once more  
Can you open the door  
For the heart  
For the heart  
One goes on  
To see  
Everything cannot be  
The way you want it to be  
Love is first  
So hold my hand  
And look in my eyes  
I need you to hold me  
To show me the way  
I need you  
So don't let me go  
Hold me tight  
Hold me in the light  
Keep me away from the night  
And hold me tight

**-Jason, Marin**

**From The Beat:** Beautiful poem, Jason. All of your poems could be songs. We're so sorry you're going through such pain and loneliness. Does writing these poems help? Does drawing help? We hope so. Who is this poem for? Can you send this poem to that person to show them how you feel?

### Help Me

Help me understand  
Show me the way  
Be there for me  
Be here as I was for you  
Help me understand  
Help me live again  
I need you to be there at my side  
Show me the way  
Show me how to live  
I wish I could live with you  
Help me understand  
Love is first  
Never abandon me  
I wish I could hold you again  
Hold you in my arms  
Be there for me  
Love is what we strive for  
Love is what we want  
Now I need you to help me live again  
To remember love is first  
Never abandon me

**-Jason, Marin**

**From The Beat:** Is this beautiful love poem for your mother, Jason? Have you heard from her lately? How old were you when this person left? How do you deal with the pain? Can your pain become your strength rather than your weakness?

**Be there for me  
Be here as I  
was for you**

### Party Time

Party time is here,  
Makin' life feel real  
Goin' to the club  
Party night is goin' on  
Showin' people I care  
Throwin' money in the air  
Spendin' time with my girl  
Showin' her that my love is so real  
Hittin' back a couple of beers  
This night is real  
This night is mine  
Spendin' money all the time  
I love this night  
I love it bright  
Bein' there for you  
Showin' that I care  
Love is first  
So throw your hands in the air  
Makin' life feel  
Because party time is here  
Because party time is here  
I want to show you the world  
Because I love you  
Still makin' life feel right  
Want to be with you at night  
Holdin' you tight  
Because party time is here  
Because party time is here  
Because party time is here

**-Jason, Marin**

**From The Beat:** We hope you get out soon, Jason, so you can get your party on. You can make this beautiful poem come true every weekend if you are able to maintain your freedom and able to party responsibly. How can you show this girl that she is special?

### Runnin'

I'ma runnin', rushin'  
Ya know what I mean?  
I'm gonna run to the right  
Gonna run to the left  
I doin' my thing  
Every day I runnin' circles  
But I'm here to stay  
I'm stayin' in Juvy every day  
I'm trapped in my cell  
But I'm prepared to stay  
I'm trapped in my thoughts  
While I'm in my room  
I'm thinking of the past  
And what I need to do  
I'm walkin' the Halls every day  
But I'm still in the same place  
Because I'm in Juvy today

**-Jason, Marin**

**From The Beat:** You must feel like you're running in circles, Jason. You must be dizzy by now. What can you do to show the judge that you deserve to have a second chance at freedom? When you are released, what can you do to stay on the right track?



## They' Scared

Most people in America  
They' really all scared of us  
It isn't my fault they never been to my area  
The things that I've seen in my short time livin'  
They ain't never experienced  
So they don't understand  
Why I come to school sagging  
Pistol in the bushes  
Eyes red and real low  
Talking loud and doing the get low  
They couldn't understand the ghetto  
Life is hard running around cookin' powder  
In a mayonnaise jar  
They don't know I live in the zone  
Where every day it's bout gunplay  
Sellin' them stones.  
See his mama, they mama, they on dope,  
The cold part about it is they asking me for the soap  
So I stay fresh, stay throwing up the Fillmore  
But for now I'm gon' pack it and go.

**-Robb B2, SF/YGC**

*From The Beat: Tight flow, Robb, you're right, most of the people who judge and fear you haven't lived the life you live. Their moms aren't drug addicts and they aren't packing. How have these things affected your life? What do they need to know about you? At the same time, do you have any choice about how you look and what you do? Can you get a legal job instead of slanging? Do you have to live a lifestyle that makes you feel you need protection? What do you need to know about yourself to build a better life for yourself?*

## Give Meat To Get Meat?

Stuck by myself on cold streets I never know  
Pushed against walls doing things  
I never thought I would do  
Disrespecting my body  
To live to see another day  
And everyday seen having to find another way  
Days rather not seen  
Moments rather not shared  
But the desperation in my mind led me there  
Wanting to grow  
Having sex in the house  
Soon got my fast behind put out  
Living to survive left me with no choice  
To lay down as a soul with no voice

**-Imay, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: This is a sad tragic story. Unfortunately there are so many out there like it. What would you tell a young woman going through what you went through? Do you have any advice? Is there anything that someone could have told you back then, that would have helped you? Sad story, but beautiful writing.*

**everyday seen having to  
find another way  
Days rather not seen  
Moments rather not shared**

## Imay And Robb's Page

### Ain't The Life For Me

This ain't the life for me,  
I should still be stacking G  
But my bankroll stopped  
And all I could do was watch  
I couldn't rewind the clock  
'Cause the clock don't stop  
But I gotta keep moving  
'Cause the music keep me and my folks groovin'  
I thought I'd never see Juvy  
But my ma always told me if I keep movin',  
I end up without a smile  
She said I was crazy and going wild  
In the streets blending in with the crowd  
Trying to be a drug lord/thug lord  
But wasn't making that much money  
So the shhh wasn't funny.  
So rob people on the side  
I never got caught so I thought God'll let that it slide  
But what goes around comes around.  
So in the Hall I can be found.  
My pops told me that you  
Might not ever get caught up  
for the big crimes that you do  
But the small ones will come and get myself in  
Be smart and be up  
Stay away from suckas and snitches  
'cause they bad for your health  
You should stay in school and put plaques on the shelf  
If you want to be successful, don't be a follower  
'Cause the so-called leader'll leave behind to suffer the  
consequences.  
Be a leader, get your bread up and be a teacher  
But for now I got to go  
For how long I know.

**-Robb B2, SF/YGC**

*From The Beat: You sound like you know what's up, but we can't tell if you're going to be changing your lifestyle because of your knowledge. Small crimes may get you caught up, but we believe the big ones will, too, so we hope you take your advice and stay in school, not just try to be "smarter." Good rhymes, Robb.*

### Inside

Inside I become lost, tired and confused. No longer in the place that I am used to. Things steady changing, feel like I'll lose my mind  
Sitting in a room alone because I did commit the crime. Faces I know soon become distorted and hard to read. Those I thought I could count on has failed me. Inside I feel small with no control and between these walls nothing seems to make me whole. Inside I try to find myself, but in the system I am lost. I wanted so bad to be the boss, but now I pay the cost.

**-Imay, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Time in the Hall is frustrating. Don't be lost, find your way back. You know what is important to you. You got a baby on the way. You need to find your focus. When you start to feel down, just remember you got a baby boy or baby girl that is going to look up to you. You are a survivor. You have so much advice and wisdom to offer this baby.*

## Ashton And Gypsy

### George's Page

#### Where I've Been And Where I'm Going

I don't come from the hardest of hoods or hardest of blocks, but never the less, I still go through sellin' drugs, jackin' cars, pimpin' ho's, shootin', and dealin' rocks.

My art is my spit that flows like snakes' venom, sure to afflict or penetrate any person who hears 'em. I'm not a gangsta, pimp, jacka, or thug, but what I am is somewhat of a hustla who believes in the "Lord" above, but my times run out and I'm now in the Hall, so for my future, I plan to better myself, look back, and laugh at all of this here in the crappy, ol' Hall.

**-Ashton, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** The crappy ol' Hall has made you realize what? What is it about your time here, that makes you want to change? Your future is important, no doubt. But what are you changing? Why? Do you have those answers? Without those, your decisions don't mean much. Right?

## I am getting desperate and my mind is short!

#### Thinking Of You

Everyday, I sit and think of no one else but you. I lost you once again. My heart is hers and I miss you more and more each and everyday.

There is no way to tell you how much I love you, but I will try. If you were a star in the sky, you would be the brightest! See, all the stars in the sky? Well, even that is not enough to show you how much I love you! I say that you are the greatest thing that ever happened to me! I love you more than life! And now you are gone! I miss you more than walking on the outs and being free! I would give up my freedom for the rest of my life just to see you once more. What would I not give for you? I think of the times you would ask me, "Can I be your girl for life?" I even think of the times you would say, "Please don't go," and I still would think to myself it would be my last chance to say "Hi," but I did not think it would be my last time seeing you. Now I am locked-up and you are gone, so what can I do now? I pray to see you again, Sabrina. I wish you knew where I am.

Well, Beat, life is a biyaaa, and then you lose one. Well, I am out.

Peace out, to the Hall, don't let no haters mess your stuff up!

**-Gypsy George, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** Love is one of our strongest emotions. We hope things work out with you and Sabrina. If not remember that the heart always has the potential to love another. Just think, what if everyone's love for each other was as strong as your love for Sabrina. What a wonderful world this would be.

#### Desperate Moments

I have a few, desperate moments in my life, some of which I wish I hadn't.

One of them being in this juvenile hall facility. Everything in my life was going well except for the fact that I had a lot of illegal things going for myself, dealing drugs, as well as using them.

Now, I'm here in the Hall and hating it, but at least not hating life! I'm glad to be alive and, in fact, here, only for the fact that I have time to change my life by making decisions for the better when I get out. Surely not the nasty food, bad clothing, and bad staff-with the exception of a few cool cats. You know who you are...

But, anyways, I feel desperate in here, not for myself, but to see my family and girl on the outs, but I'll be out one day. Hopefully soon, but desperate, I'll never be, only because "in God I trust."

**-Ashton, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** Ashton, it's nice to hear such a positive attitude. But, ya know, when you have a lot of illegal things in your life, well, that's not all good. You know what to do when you get out? You know how to not get caught up again? You know what you want? Answer those questions, and you will make the right decisions.

#### Desperate Questions?

I feel something coming, but do I know what it is? Will I ever know what it is? Only God can tell me now! I am getting desperate and my mind is short!

I need help! Who can I talk to? Nobody here knows what my life is. Is there anybody that might tell me something to help me? Can I change my life by myself? I write for nothing. No one cares! Why should someone care for someone as gone as me? I would like to know if life goes on after death. Is that what I am seeking? Death? Or is life beyond these walls? These walls have seen so many tears fall. I would like to ask if they cry, too? From all the stuff these walls have seen, I wish they would crumble and fall. Well Beat, just some stuff I think of. Beat, got any advice? I am out!

**-Gypsy George, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** Gypsy George, man, we've all been there, millions of questions and no answers. It's good you feel something coming. Life works in cycles. Everything isn't always great and everything isn't always messed up. This cycle is part of life. It's what helps us grow. Without growth, we are dead. We know what you are going through. We care. We all have questions about life, about death, about what to do. One thing we do know, which history has taught us is, anything is possible. If you wanna change your life, you can! You have the potential to be the next president. You have the potential to do anything you put your heart and your mind to. We know it sound cliché, but, it's true. Check your history lessons, all great things came from struggle. Without the struggle there is no accomplishment.

## Now I am locked-up and you are gone, so what can I do now?

## Alaska

Here is my story about "Alaska" — my home. Just thinking of it I can smell the fresh snow on the ground and seeing the sun come up. I remember waking up rolling me a blunt goin' outside smelling the fresh air looking at the snow and watching the birds fly sitting in front of my house smoking a blunt thinking of what kind of day it will be. Hoping for a nice sunny day so I can go out and make me two three thousand dollars doing bodywork — that is fixing cars.

Most of the time we get good looking days and the night is the best. You looking in the sky and see the lights all the colors like red, green, blue, and sometimes even purple. That is just the winter. The summer is the best. The sun stays up until four in the morning you could swear it is day but sure enough it is nighttime. I miss Alaska. I miss my waking up in the morning looking out the window. I miss goin' fishing. I miss going to the spot somkin' bs with my brother and our females chilling. Man I really miss Alaska. I miss it so bad I can taste it. Well that's what I do in Alaska. There is more to do but that is just me.

Special thanks to all our counselors — thank you for all of your support, those special talks when we down. Thanks Goosby, Ward, Muhammad, Oats, and Miss Jones, and Miss Lasey. Thank you for takin' time to help me out. I will never forget my time with you guys. It may not be much to you but to me — it is a lot. God Bless. To The Beat thank you for letting us show how we feel. Thank you. God bless you. Last but not least is my family — I miss you all and hope to see you soon. God bless. I am out. And Mr. Tempel I did not forget you thank you for the talks and that little push you give me every day to go on — God bless.

**-Gypsy, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat: Home is where the heart is! If you were in Alaska right now, what would you be doing? Did you change after leaving Alaska? How does the urban city life compare to your life in Alaska? Where did you feel a bigger sense of community and family? When you are released, do you plan on going back to Alaska? Where do you want to raise your future family?**

**keep your head up  
and pray to see  
tomorrow.**

## Desperate

When I feel desperate, I have the tendency to make rational decisions. You may not realize it if you have hit rock bottom, but regardless, if you have or haven't, you need to express yourself to someone.

**-Cory, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat: That's some good advice. If you don't express yourself to someone, you're bound to explode. You are a strong person. How is it that you are able to maintain rational decisions while feeling desperate? What do you tell yourself? What do you base your decisions on? What is it that is most important to you in your times of desperation?**

## Cory And Gypsy's Page

### Dear Beat

Dear Beat, you all ask what my plans are. Well to tell the truth. I am going back home to Alaska to start over again that is after I get to get out of this shhhh I got my self into and to do what I do best — work. No more robbing doing people — just honest real work. Working till I see the bones on my hands, just to help my family and to be one of the best.

So then when someone says look at Gypsy he is not a prisoner but he is now a good person. You all ask how serious am I well this is what I go to say: IT IS MY TIME TO DO THE IMPOSSIBLE TO CHANGE FOR THE GOOD OF LIFE!!

**-Gypsy, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat: We are feeling that! We hope that you can educate your peers that there is nothing wrong with a little hard work! We all should sweat a little for the things we have! That way we will appreciate them even more.**

### I Wonder...

Before I throw my mattress on the stone cold floor, I wonder what possible could be, still in this room.

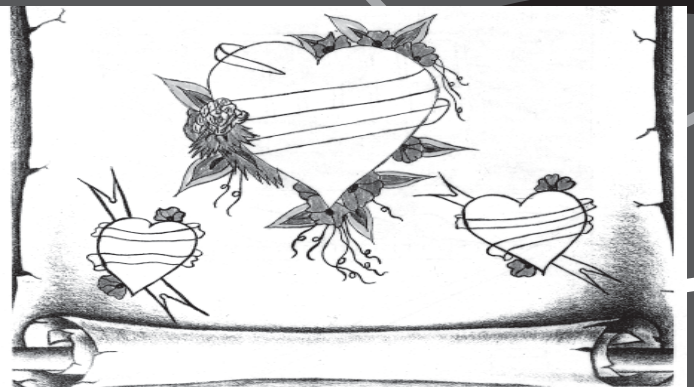
Only my imagination would be able to vividly describe what, and who, has come in and out of these walls. I have been here for about ninety days, and my mind wanders about this all the time. This also applies to the real world and all over the country. Youth Authority commitments, juveniles tried as adults, the craziest demented kids that have been in here.

I can only picture and express by words of what their everyday struggle and hustle was like. If they come from broken homes, poverty, gang life, etc. My words of advice to them would be keep your head up and pray to see tomorrow.

To Armando, keep yo' head up. Stay safe.

**-Cory, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat: Cory, the mind seems to wonder in places like the Hall. We want to hear from your imagination. What was this person like? Do you think that the Hall's past residents relate to you? Do you feel like your struggle is similar to others? What situations can you relate to?**





## Shomoe's Page

### Let Me Love You

as i walk to my bed i see my baby  
and i start to feel better already  
so i lay by her side  
feeling of love  
that feels like an ocean's tide  
as i hold her close  
and whisper in her ear  
i am so glad you're here  
so i start to rub and kiss  
and i make sure not to miss  
a spot on her body  
trying to make her happy  
sighs of enjoyment from her mouth  
make me happy  
just to see  
smell and caress  
makes me feel the best  
to know i hold love in my arms  
that i would do anything  
to keep her from harm  
as we drift on into sleep  
holding each other  
i hear a beep  
and realize  
i am alone in my bedroom  
thinking of holding her under the moon  
but these are just thoughts for now  
that i will come to see  
some way somehow  
we will come together  
i will do whatever  
for now we're apart  
but this is just a small part  
of our relationship  
soon we'll be able to touch  
i will be able to make  
her feel safe by my touch  
so she will know i am near  
for her to shed a tear  
on my shoulder  
so i could hold her  
and give her my heart  
right now it feels like  
i can't do my part  
how can i comfort her  
from so far away  
but she deserves better  
she deserves someone that can hold her  
and truly express his love to her  
and not just promise her  
why can't i comfort her  
why can't i show my love for her  
because she is so far away  
but i will find a way

**-Shomoe, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** About three hundred years ago, a poet described the true love of two, separated by great distance, as being like the tool you use in math class to draw a circle. A needle at one point marks the center, and the farther away the other goes, the further it leans in that direction.

### Tension In The Air

there's a feeling in the air  
so much tension the air's about to tear  
chaos breaks and runs rampant  
now tension causing people to flip their lids  
fights breaking out, fear everywhere  
people going crazy with no cure  
fists flying, blood leaking  
now i hear handcuffs clinking  
tumble and tussle, slammed  
people's faces and bodies, crammed  
into the ground  
now everything starting to slow down  
tensions have stricken  
leaving turmoil  
as a result of tension  
blood boils  
this volcano has erupted  
now it's all over so abruptly  
now tension hangs lightly  
as if it were only here slightly  
but i saw tension create chaos  
now everyone feels the loss  
when you feel the tension in the air  
you better leave before it tears

**-Shomoe, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** It could happen anywhere, but seems to happen in here, where bodies and minds are locked down, pain and frustration make tensions abound. Quietly to move away, physically, mentally, whatever it takes; is good advice. It's not about manhood, courage, strength, or being hard. Life behind bars will make open wounds out of scars. Violence promises relief, but just increases the grief. Terrific poem, Shomoe!

### Looking Out My Window

when i look out my window i wish for better days  
days spent with my love but it won't be today  
yet those days will come somehow some way  
looking out my window i wish i could lay  
next to my love and hold her tight  
and for this i fight  
when i look out my window i wish  
i could sit down and eat a dish  
with my love in view  
every time i look out my window i imagine the view  
of us together under the stars  
the sky so clear we could see mars  
but then i notice in my windows there are bars  
and the only thing i see is city lights and moving cars  
as i snap back to reality  
and come back from my wishful galaxy  
looking out my window boggles my mind  
i have missed so much time  
and now it's too late to rewind  
but these wishes of mine will soon come true  
when i leave — my dream will come true  
and i'll hold her tight under the moonlight  
but for now i wish for better days  
this will happen someday  
but for now i look at the bay  
wishing for these better days

**-Shomoe, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** A prisoner's heart that hides each day, in solitary darkness shines bright with pain. Its heat melts metal bars, bends time into a lariat to rope in the stars. Harnessing heaven above, the prisoner breaks out — in songs of love.

## Shomoe's Page

### Seven Roses

seven roses on your wrist  
not because i felt you kiss  
but because i love you with my heart  
and i'll make sure we'll never part  
each rose has a meaning  
just like your touch has me fien'ing  
rose one of course is for love  
rose two is for your grace of a dove  
rose three is for how you hold  
me together so i don't fold  
rose four is for how i adore you  
rose five is to show you  
i'll do anything for you  
rose six is because you're mine  
rose seven is for our love  
our roses to combine

-Shomoe, 150 Crew

**From The Beat:** We know you're working on an illustration to this poem that's not quite done. But your message is clear and shines bright as the sun!

### Honey'd Tongue (Part One)

these words of love leave my honey'd tongue  
sounding better than any song sung  
my honey'd tongue is not just words  
it's to caress and touch all your curves  
my honey'd tongue is only for you my love  
my honey'd tongue is to lure  
you into my heart  
and to make sure we never part  
to put happiness on your face  
to tickle you in your place  
my honey'd tongue will dance for you  
it will talk — touch — love — you  
just — as — i — do  
my tongue — not the only one  
you — got one too

-Shomoe, 150 Crew

**From The Beat:** Such sweet sensuality, mixed with just enough sentimentality, to make — one honey-tongue'd cake.

### Honey'd Tongue (Part Two)

your tongue is honey'd too  
your honey'd tongue has done  
things to remove my pain  
the touch of your honey'd tongue  
drives me insane  
when we play the games we play  
your sweet honey'd tongue  
makes me say your name  
and confess my love  
with your honey'd tongue you  
confess your love too  
the taste of your honey'd tongue is sweet  
there's no honey nor taste can beat  
i savor our honey'd tongues  
the sound of your voice hung  
in my mind every day  
i want your honey'd tongue  
to touch me in every way  
as i lay and write these lines  
i await the time  
our honey'd tongues fuse  
but for now i amuse  
you with poems  
of love

-Shomoe, 150 Crew

**From The Beat:** Love sent in a poem, provides disembodied love a home; yet promises to be, both heaven and earth eventually.

**i love you with my heart  
and i'll make sure  
we'll never part**

### Time Is Slowly Crawling

These last five hundred and forty-something days, have been flying by faster than ever expected. But as soon as I got someone to stay by my side that I care about — these days have to get long! Minutes turn to days, days to years.

Time seems to be stopping just to make everything that much harder! But I know it's just me, and that's why I write in this notebook — to make time pass. But it will never pass by fast enough. My weekends go by too fast and weekdays too slow!

When time's short, it gets stretched till it tears, or you break. I've seen it break too many short-timers! So I stay strong, strong as can be — because I can't just be strong for me. I got to be strong for my grandma, grandpa, brothers, sister, dad, Thuy! 'Cause when people look, they see a rock; and if I start to chip, they start to chip — and we all crumble.

So I put on my warrior's mask and stay strong. And I will do this till the day I die. I'll be the rock that I have to be in order to keep everything together. Nothing will break me down, because I am strong pound for pound. Nothing can hurt, 'cause I've felt the pain of the world — and what else does it have? Physical? Nothing. Mental? Nothing. Emotional? Been there, done that.

I stay strong. That's why I curse God, 'cause He can do no more damage! If He kills me, He does me a favor. If

He doesn't, I laugh in his face! Not God, Satan, nor man, can break me! Not with this Wappo and Pomo blood in my veins! With the blood of the Aztecas that flows through my heart! Not never!

I spit in the face of pain and emotions, and laugh at them! You got me once! Twice! But now I am strong, and hollow. You can only hurt a man with emotions. This man has no more, not with this mask on! The mask of a warrior! I have no fear.

So I got to be the rock with the mask, and that's what I am! I am a man of rough skin, flaming heart, hollow soul, strong mind, honey'd tongue. Hurt me if you can!

Take your shot! I am right here. If not, let me live with no interruptions. Let time resume back to flying past, so I can get to my love of freedom and woman. Let the hands of time — go!

-Shomoe, 150 Crew

**From The Beat:** The prophet/poet William Blake named the god of this world, *Nobodaddy* — nobody's daddy! A god of suffering, punishment, pain, and self-righteousness. To be there for those you love, whether in the flesh here on earth or watching you from the spirit world (like your beloved grandmother), you must oppose this heartless *Nobodaddy*, with all your body and soul. And yet you cannot become one with the mask of the warrior unless you set aside a space and a time to invite even the most dangerous and painful emotions to sit with you by your heart's fire. When you can endure their presence no longer, throw them out again. They will then lose their power to surprise you and catch you unaware. Eventually, they will become as familiar to you as a dog crouched by the fire, waiting for you to toss a scrap of meat; their snarls will grow weak, their manner meek. And they will never again attack from behind your spirit mask, your warrior face.

## Shadow's Page

### This World

Society is so shhhhhy these days  
All negativity is anyone says  
And don't know that they could make a world of a  
difference  
If I could just find a way to gain some sense  
on how I could do it  
But people have put me in a deep mental pit  
If I could change the world I would  
And if everyone tried — we could  
We could stop all this violence and be cool  
And not act like such a fool.  
We can only try so hard until we give up  
But you know it only takes one person to ask someone  
"what's up"  
It could lift them up and make them happy  
Instead of being pissed and sappy.  
If I could I smoke a fat ass joint  
With the world, they'd see my point!

**-Shadow, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** We're glad that you see that you can make a difference in the world. You make a difference each week when you write your pieces in The Beat in case you didn't know. How do you plan on starting world peace? Hint, it doesn't start with a joint.

### Sometimes

Sometimes I wish I weren't alive  
That I wouldn't have to feel the pain  
I wish I could go away like the rain  
Sometimes I think about life  
And what it would be like to have a wife  
To love me for who I am inside  
Not for me on the outside  
Sometimes I wanna be alone  
And put life on postpone  
To see myself from the inside out  
To see what I'm all about  
Sometimes I wanna hold my sister  
Take her in my arms not to let go  
Because she went through the same pain as me  
Sometimes I don't want to be human  
But a cow so I can always be shroomin'  
And to live a shorter life than this  
'Cause this life makes me pissed!

**-Shadow, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** We all often wish for death, but the pleasures in life wouldn't be so sweet without pain! You should hug your sister whenever you get the chance — it would be beautiful and spiritual in every way! It isn't the struggle that defines our character, but the way in which we deal with our struggles.

**I wish I could go  
away like the rain**

### Sometimes Drugs

I know drugs mess up your body  
But some of us need them to help us  
To take us from this terrible place  
That makes us feel like such a waste  
Sometimes people need to get high  
to calm their nerves  
Sometimes life needs a few curves  
'Cause it's too straight  
And full of hate  
Sometimes we need to be taken from this place  
'Cause they tell us we're a disgrace  
But drugs help me to deal with you  
And your bull shhh you put me through.

**-Shadow, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** You can't turn to drugs every time you feel bad! You'll waste away your talent and skills! You're way too smart for that! How can you deal with your pain in a more positive way? How can you make it so that the bull people say doesn't get underneath your skin?

### A Good Memory

When I was younger, about 12 or 13, I was going to Hayward Community Day School, a continuation school in South Hayward, and when I would get suspended for talking shhh to the teachers, my mom would take me shopping, and do fun things with me.

On this particular day I got suspended for calling the teacher a "cunt" and my mom took me to the Southland Mall, and spent \$120 on a pair of orange (my favorite color) and white Iverson's. Afterwards she bought me an outfit to match the shoes and price, then she took me out to dinner at Sizzlers, my favorite restaurant, just me and her.

I just want to say I love you mom!

**-Shadow, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** Do you think that your mom dealt with your behavior in the right way? What did your mom teach you by taking you shopping after you cursed out your teacher? What kind of disciplinary action do you think your mother should have taken? Put yourself in your mom's shoes and tell us how you would have handled you?

### 1 Miss You

I miss you  
Like no one can imagine  
It's everything about you  
I wish I could hold you again.  
I miss the way we used to be  
Holding each other wishing, apart — never to be  
I remember that first night under the stars  
And I remember sleepin' in cars.  
I miss the way you cuddle  
And on a rainy day when we jumped in puddles  
And the days at the Bart station  
Pan handlin' to feed your pregnant ass and  
Buildin' our relation.  
I love you Melissa Sue-Ellen  
Forever, even after death, I end.

**-Shadow, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** What do you miss the most about this girl? When she was pregnant, what kind of feelings did you feel? Were you ready to be a father? Did you plan for the future in any way? Were you looking forward to being a dad? Why or why not?



## I Thought You Were My Friend

Why me?  
What did I do?  
You know I heard you  
But you didn't regret it  
Even though you claim to be my friend  
Telling me we're going to be friends to the end  
But you hit me  
Not physically, emotionally  
Where there is no healing  
Where I will remember it forever  
I told you to take it back you said "never"  
What's up with that?  
Remember in the creek we sat  
Smoking pot out my bong  
I never thought things would go wrong  
Until the day  
I heard you say  
"I'm not your friend. I was using you"  
My heart crushed  
I thought you were my friend.

**-Shadow, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** You seem to be tight with this person so maybe this person said this out of anger and he/she didn't mean it. And if this person used you then it's his/her loss 'cause you are a cool person. Don't trip though — just be confident in yourself and don't let the fake people get to you! It's a must that you help yourself overcome the pain within. Address the luggage you carry so in due time you'll feel a whole lot lighter.

## Wish, Hope, and Pray

The things I wish for, are not all that hard to get. They are just things that I hope and pray for in my life.

Some of these things are: a good job, a high school diploma and maybe even a little bit of college. The thing I want most in my life, is to succeed! I want to be something more than I am now.

I don't want to be a failure. I want my family to be proud of me. I hope and pray that I can get — and be — all of these things I wish for.

**-Crazy, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** We want to add our wishes, hopes, and prayers to yours — but only you can make these wishes come true!

## Shomoe And Crazy's Page

### A Messed Up Life Too

When I was six years old my father left me, and I lived with false "dads" and females all my life.

Within the last two years I have gotten my girlfriend pregnant three times. I have been on the run so I couldn't get a job. So my life isn't perfect.

I often try to straighten my life out by trying to sober-ize for a long enough period to make some money "under the counter."

I took care of my pregnant lady, while we were livin' on the streets. I love you Melissa!

**-Shadow, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** Nobody's life is perfect so we hope you don't feel alone. How are you doing without drugs now that you are in Juvenile Hall? When you are released, what will you be doing so that your future will be better than your past?

### People's Causin' Me Pain

I'm locked up in the Hall  
And people make fun of me  
When someone says something  
Others laugh so hard they fall  
They don't understand me at all  
When I try to stand up for myself  
They find a way to use it against me  
But what they don't see  
Is that they don't care that they hurt me  
All I can do is ignore this BS  
But they always threaten me  
So I tell, but staff just sit on their ass  
And say I'm lying when I say, "no one likes me."

**-Shadow, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** You reveal plenty of pain in these series of pieces you submit. As for the folks in the hall our suggestion to you is to smother them with kindness. Kindness is a winner. They also say the best revenge is success! Also, ignoring them is the best way to go. Ignorance is bliss. Plus, if they don't get a reaction from you — they will eventually go away. We suggest you kill them with kindness. If you love the ones that hate you — they will have nothing to do!

## I could care less about who was here before me!

### Me, Myself, and I

Do I ever wonder who was in my room in the past? Hell no! I could care less about who was here before me!

If you want to know the truth, I could truly give a what about most of the people in here now. I only worry about me, myself, and I — I try not to think about most of the things going on in here!

I only think about what I'm gonna do in the future, because there ain't too much to do now besides wait. Stay up, I'm out.

**-Crazy, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** If you can follow through on your plans for the future, you'll be helping others plenty just by your example. So maybe the best thing you can do for others, is save yourself.

### Desperate On the Real

I've been desperate. Man, on the real, I've almost always been desperate for something!

I'm always trying to find a place to stay; always trying to figure out the next come up. I'm always desperate to stay out of jail and away from the police.

I guess we all are desperate for something most of the time. Stay up.

**-Crazy, 150 Crew**

**From The Beat:** With the training you'll get at ROP, you'll have a chance to return to your community with the skills to get and hold a decent job — and that should relieve a lot of desperation!

## **Boog Money And Lil' Rickie's Page**

### **Missing You**

I'm still missin' you even though you're in heaven  
I'm glad you didn't go in the year of '97  
but my dreams are not stopping and my goals are still going  
but when I look to the sky I wish we were blowing  
but now you in heaven peepin' down on how I'm living  
Aye, tell Jesus I said thanks for the blessin' He sent me  
Tee and Kim, them girls, still love me like they own child  
and grams nerves get mad but still she smile  
and I know they got a reason why you gone  
and therefore I'm succeedin' on  
but when I think about it man, I could never be alone.

Rip Ray-Ray

**-Boog Money, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: We're sorry to hear about the loss of your loved one. It's always hard when you realize the person you loved so much is not coming back and the only comfort we have sometimes is knowing that they're in a better place. How do you keep this person's memory alive? What's your plan for living a good life?*

### **This Life I Lead, Pt.11**

This life I lead,  
runnin' in them Hayward streets  
representin' the turf  
till my heart don't beat  
high off of weed,  
steady poppin' E's  
sippin' on a Bull  
and a fifth of Hennessy.  
I ain't speakin' on situations  
just feelin' the vibration  
from a gun sprayin'.  
I ain't sayin' the life  
that I lead is coo'  
'cause as quick  
as you play the game  
and roll the dice,  
you could've just gambled  
your own life.

**-Lil' Rickie, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: Do you always wanna gamble with your life? Where do you think this life that you live leads? What kind of road are you taking and do you think it leads to a dead end?*

### **Change**

Is change for me?  
That soldier from them Hayward streets  
Will it be too late for me to change  
And lose my life to another "G?"  
Sometimes I dream of enemies  
Gunning me down with no conscience,  
but I might be payin'  
The consequence.

**-Lil' Rickie, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: How much of your dreams are actually a part of the reality you're living in? Do you think that there are always consequences to everything you do? How high of a price are you paying now?*

### **Memories**

Memories is all I got  
but when I lost him he took two shots  
But now the streets are shook  
and folks is singing to the cops  
But memories is all I got  
But when I look to the sky  
and began to ask questions  
I began to smile in memories  
of his facial expression  
I wonder if I'm losing  
or if memories are being tested  
So I open my Bible and began to read Jesus'  
confessions  
I remember going to the spot  
bagging up dubb rocks  
But I gave it up, so I know something's got to stop  
Call me soft, call me whatever, I'm tired of losing  
So I try to make memories much better  
And some memories hit the spot  
But when you lose your loved one  
memories is all you got  
Rip Ray-Ray and Uncle Sam

**-Boog Money, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: When you think of the memories, do you often smile? How do you deal with your pain? Remember, your loved ones have only left you physically — they never leave you spiritually. Their new home is in your heart! Tell us a story about Ray-Ray and Uncle Sam too? Keep your head up!*

### **He Worth It**

He's worth it because He gave us light  
He's worth it 'cause He gave his son's life  
He's worth it 'cause He's in heaven making it better for us  
He's worth it 'cause He made it in God we trust  
He's worth it 'cause our life is like a bus  
It rolls and rolls but in the Bible they're many stories told  
He's worth it, 'cause on the third day he rose.  
Rip Ray-Ray.

**-Boog Money, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: How does having God in your life help make you stronger? Do you follow all of God's teachings or only the convenient ones? Why or why not? Tell us more about your religion, your beliefs.*

### **No Jokes**

Life is not a joke  
when you facin' 25 without ya folks  
life is not a joke  
when your life can't turn the ropes  
it's not a joke  
when your dreams are being choked  
it's not a joke  
when people are killing folks  
man this life is not a joke.  
Rip Ray-Ray

**-Boog Money, 150 Crew**

*From The Beat: So it's the death of Ray-Ray that has you taking your life seriously. Tell us of your mind set of the days when you thought life was a joke? We know you know folks who thinks life is a joke. What words of advice do you have for them?*

## Been There Done That

I have been through so much it feels like it ain't that much left to do. I feel anything I do I will just be repeating myself. So I gotta go get myself outta this state, move somewhere and start over.

-Tru B5

**From The Beat:** Wow, just a teenager and you've already done everything! Hmmm. Have you held a steady job, finished high school, traveled abroad, been a grandfather, starred in a movie, eaten Afghan food, written a book, or prepared an eight-course meal? We hope you succeed in starting over, because we bet you have a long list of things still left to do...

## Desperate

At one time I felt desperate when me and one of my friends were stuck in some back cuts. We were slipping and in my car I just bought, and I was desperate to get from where I was. Luckily I was with one of my friends that knew how to fix what was wrong with my car and fixed it.

-Otis B1

**From The Beat:** You're lucky to have a friend that can fix cars. Have you learned how to do it yourself? If not, you should hold onto that friend...

## "Desperate"

### Desperate

I'm desperate right now, I need to be doing something with my life and with my wife. I got to step my game up because being desperate only stresses me out in here. Talking about this would, if I did that, only make me feel more desperate, "helpless," can't do.

But I can and I will because only I, AR, live this life, and I'm Ridah it out. Just me and my girlfriend. So I have to stop looking for sympathy because it's only I who got to do for me.

-Ar B5

**From The Beat:** There's nothing wrong with sympathy. We all need it from time to time. We agree that you can turn your life in the direction you want to go, but that doesn't mean you can't use help. Like sympathy, we can all use some of that, too.

### Still Desperate

Kicked out the house at fifteen. Didn't know where to go, so I went back to the jungle. I couldn't get a job, so I turned to 211s, fights and sellin' dope on the block wit' my turf hawgz.

That's how I started getting locked up. Went to a group home. I was desperate to get out 'til I was about to get terminated. So I ran and was back homeless again. Desperate, I tried to find somewhere to stay. Now back, locked up.

Desperate seem like... Young Sochie an endless cycle if you ask me.

-Young Sochie B4

**From The Beat:** Well, Young Sochie, we did ask you, so we're grateful you answered. We feel your frustration, but we think it's much too early in your life to be seeing it as "an endless cycle." We think there could be an end to this cycle, even if it's not easy to bring about. When you ran from your group home out of desperation, you were younger than you are now. Maybe that additional maturity will let you see that sometimes it's necessary to sacrifice things we love doing in the short run in order to be able to do the things we love in the long run. In that effort lies the possibility of ending the "endless" cycle.

**Some people  
are desperate,  
desperate,  
desperate, so  
desperate!**

### Desperate

I'm desperate to get out of this life of guns and drugs. On the block watch my back for the one who's out to pull my plug. Moms at home throwin' a fit 'Cause pops ain't at home.

Desperate to get out, out of this life, out this cell. The way I see it, I'ma dig my grave spinning in rage. Going insane. I'm desperate.

-Unknown B4

**From The Beat:** As you get older, can you see ways out of your desperate situation that you didn't see when you were younger? Do you have any control over what happens to you? Were there other choices you could have made — or that you can make in the future — that can change this picture?

### Desperate Right Now

I feel desperate right now because I been in here four and half months. I got one and a half months left before my six months is up for my 707. When that's all over, they trying to send me somewhere for 18 months.

Man, I ain't feeling that at all but where they send me is a good group home, they say. I don't know, Man, I just want to go home. I miss my loved ones on some real shhh.

-Lil' Dakota B4

**From The Beat:** We feel the sadness in this piece, Lil' Dakota, but sometimes all you can do is bite the bullet and do what you have to do. We hope you're able to think of the long run when you're in that group home so that you don't run. Sometimes it's hard for all of us to consider the long-range consequences of our acts, but when you know what will happen to you if you do a successful program and what will happen to you if you don't, it might help you stick it out. Sometimes, we just have to take the medicine we're prescribed, even when it tastes like shhh!

### Ready For Change

Desperate, I been, many of times. Desperation, shhh that got me in here. I was desperate to survive on the outs and not losing anything or anyone. So therefore I made some bad choices out of laziness. I could've got a job in order to get that light green ink paper.

I don't feel like I would've made a change back then, but now I am making a change.

-Pg B4

**From The Beat:** Can you explain why you're ready to make a change now when you weren't ready to make it then? What needed to happen before you recognized it's time to change?

### Tempted To Do Something

To me desperate means that you are so tempted to do something. It could be like robbin' a lady or man, but that's not coo'. Some people are desperate for sex, money and drugs, but that ain't coo' either. Some people are desperate, desperate, desperate, so desperate! Kamay, stay down!

-Lil' Lloyd B1

**From The Beat:** If you were really desperate for something, what would you do, Lil' Lloyd? What if you had no food and no family to go to for help? What could you do, that's legal, to earn some money fast? Who could you go to, besides your family, for help? Have you ever been desperate? What for? How did you handle it?

### Desperate

I feel desperate right now, because I'm really wasting my time in here. I could do so much outside of this place.

Right now I have to go out of home for about a year or more. I could have never came to this place, but I really screwed up, and now I just feel helpless, because there is nothing I could do to help my situation.

Once I go to the place that I have to go, I'm just going to do my best. But once I complete the program, I will only have two months of probation left, and after that I'm a free man. I will still regret that I ever came here, but it will all be in the past.

-J B1

**From The Beat:** You express regret that you came to Juvy, but express no remorse about doing whatever brought up in there, J. How do you feel for the person or people you hurt — or do you feel you didn't hurt anybody? Part of the lesson Juvy is trying to teach is that people suffer by what you're doing to them. You take responsibility for what you did, and that's a good start. Do you think your patience with your sentence and program will sustain you through it? We hope so, and that you will get out as soon as possible! And, by the way, if you're thinking about what you did to get here, and what you have to give up to stay out of here, then you are not wasting your time! Great luck!

### The Streets Is Missing Me!

I'm desperate to go home with my family and sleep in my own bed, and see my mom and sisters and homies, 'cause the streets is missing me!

-Lil' Clap B1

**From The Beat:** How often have you heard from your homies from the streets, Lil' Cap, since you've been in Juvy? You may be missing the streets and they might be missing you, but what have they done for you lately? Is the reason you're in Juvy because of the streets? Why don't you kick back and chill in Juvy and reconsider where the streets are guiding you? To just more endless streets?





## "Desperate"

### The Struggle

Damn! The stuff I go through is called "the struggle." I can, in some ways, but my auntie is a heroin-addict and she does my cousins very scandalous, like steal their clothes, money, and bundles.

My people from the 'hood know what I'm talking about. Me, I've been there before. Having to hide my stuff before I go to sleep, so I won't have to go through that. Auntie, did you steal my bundle? Man, did you steal forty dollars out my pockets? That's the stuff I go through.

-Fat Boy

**From The Beat:** Damn! That ain't nothing nice. It must be really rough to go through life always worrying about someone close to you stealing from you. Hopefully going through those experiences hasn't spoiled your trust of people. Generally if you show people trust, they will maintain it. And if you are dealing with those few selfish folks out there, that choose to take advantage, well you don't need to be around those kinds of people.

### Very Desperate

i'm very desperate  
 i need some weed  
 and some money  
 that's why i'm here now  
 bein' desperate  
 looking for ways  
 to get my trees  
 i'm on my knees  
 beggin' this trick  
 to provide my needs  
 that's why i'm desperate  
 i'm desperate for money  
 plus my honey want some money  
 and he want his friends  
 to run me  
 but them ninjas  
 ain't came out the pocket  
 with no money  
 this' why i'm desperate

-Me-Me

**From The Beat:** This poem is so desperate and confused, it hurts to read it through. At least in here, you've got food and shelter, and a chance to think through the desperate measures you took for a little money — 'cause you're hooked on "trees"? 'Cause you're hooked on the man you call "honey"? You deserve better, much better, so much better than these desperate deeds.

### Desperate Me

The situation I was in, that relates to Lil' Johnny's situation — I was desperate! I was desperate for money.

So I would do things like go shoplift CD's and video games, 'cause I needed the money, or I was desperate for the money, knowing that I was on probation. So that's how my story relates to Lil' Johnny's.

-Eric

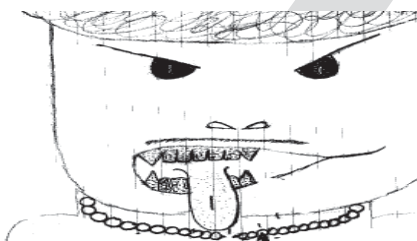
**From The Beat:** So now you know, you can't substitute one crime for another as a strategy to get over on probation. Right?

### Feelin' Messed-Up

i was fifteen an' my father left me  
 me and my mom  
 we were in a messed-up neighborhood  
 people were selling weed an' dope  
 bustin' into other people's houses an' cars  
 they busted into my house one night  
 the robbers names were robert an' steven  
 they were my homies for like six months  
 an' we used to always hang out an' stuff  
 we used to do stuff together  
 like play football basketball  
 all that kind of stuff  
 but now i can't trust them no more  
 or do things with them  
 now they have changed their life around  
 like going to school to college  
 an' stuff like that  
 an' they have girlfriends an' kids  
 an' they're getting basketball scholarships

-Chris

**From The Beat:** It's still a good thing that Robert and Steven turned their lives around. Yet, it must leave you feeling left out. They owe you amends, big time! Meanwhile, the best thing that you can do — for you — is turn your life around, too. You may not get a scholarship, but you can start living legit and life will get better bit by bit. Even in a messed-up world, make the best of it!



### The Desperate Moment

The desperate moment: When you want money and you steal, rob, or maybe even risk your life, lie or take, and you know desperate moments end you up in jail.

If "Lil' Johnny" doesn't get a job, he can go to jail and mess up his life, (Stuff that you know already).

-Larry

**From The Beat:** Why do you think people turn to the last resort when the going gets tough? What would you do if you were facing what Lil' Johnny is facing?

### Desperate Measures

Well, what "Lil' Johnny" need to do, is get some girl friends, and he'll be all right.

Sure, he'll be on the block grindin' — but that's his destiny, to fail in life. His daddy left, ain't got no mama!

Can I relate to Lil' Johnny's situation? Yeah, I can relate! I don't have no dad. But I know him. Ha ha ha ha!

-Poppa Ditty Pop

**From The Beat:** Your "jokes" have such a hard edge, we try to laugh but tears come instead.

### For Love

desperate for love  
 in a hurry for crushes  
 nevertheless  
 i will get my destiny boy  
 but you know what  
 i say to all these  
 fake wannabe sugardaddies  
 really think someone is gonna  
 cry over their' classlessness  
 desperate for love  
 flush that being desperate  
 down the toilet  
 i am not wasting my time  
 on one of these boys in here  
 it's all about me  
 alexandria  
 and jehovah  
 — god

-Alexandria

**From The Beat:** You surprised us with that twist of the toilet knob, flush away all the trashy sugardaddy mob — to promise your life and your love to God. Stay true to your destiny, for the best is yet to be!

**My people  
 from the  
 'hood know  
 what I'm  
 talking  
 about**

### A Lil' Like Lil' Johnny

One thing I can relate to in Lil' Johnny's story, is that my father left me when I was just a child. And I do stay in a messed-up community, too — but I adapted myself.

At times I do feel desperate from being up in this place all the time. But the only way I can get out of this situation, is just by serving my time.

-Unefarious

**From The Beat:** But the bad situation isn't just being in the Hall, it's how you keep setting yourself up for a fall. To get out of that situation, will take more than just serving time. You need to do some work on your mind.

### Desperate

If one of my friends or someone was desperate, I would try to give them the best advice I could because you never know what they're thinking or what they might do.

I would probably tell them to look for help like if they got kicked out they house then they should go to a family member or a close friends house, or just another situation. "Just keep ya' head up and don't give up on yo' self, even if there's bad times, just believe in God and have faith 'cause you never know what tomorrow will bring."

-Gina

**From The Beat:** That's some good advice Gina. There is another lesson in here as well. When a friend is feeling desperate, the most important thing is to be there for them. You offer good advice, but the best offering is being a friend.

**we were in a  
 messed-up  
 neighborhood  
 people were  
 selling weed  
 an' dope  
 bustin' into  
 other people's  
 houses an' cars**

## "I Wish I Was. . ."

### In the First Place

i wish i was at home  
chillin' in my room  
watchin' some t v  
i wish i wasn't here  
in this rotten place  
i wish i hadn't messed up  
in the first place  
i wish i hadn't done  
that stupid stuff  
that got me here  
in the first place

-Dillon

**From The Beat:** You will be free, but will your memory tell you what to do and not, so you never again have to be caught up?

### Home Tomorrow

i wish i was home with my family  
eating something good real good  
right now i'm in the hall  
it's my tenth day in here  
but tomorrow i'll be going home  
i wish i never came to the hall

-Jonathan

**From The Beat:** You have to start to change your part in what brought you to the Hall, if you want to stay free and live with your family and all.

### Wish To Be Home

I wish I was at home with my family. If I was out I would be at home with my girlfriend and my mom and dad playing dominoes.  
I wish I was at home eating pizza with my family. I wish I could change my life.

-Johnny

**From The Beat:** We hope that you learned a lesson from all the drama you are going through right now. We hope you know that nothing is worth separating yourself from your family. How can you make sure that you won't be putting your freedom at risk anymore?

### i wish

i was home  
i wish  
i was with  
my family  
i wish  
i was sleeping  
in my own  
bed

-Eric

**From The Beat:** Money can't buy a loving family. It's priceless!

### Me

i wish  
i was at home  
i wish  
i wasn't alone  
i wish  
i had someone  
to console  
me

-Lil' Mama Hanna

**From The Beat:** If you look within and see a friend, then let your consolation begin!

## i wish i wasn't here in this rotten place

### I Did Wrong

i wish i was  
at home right now  
because i would like to be  
with my family  
but now i'm in jail  
sometimes i do not  
like to be in here  
and sometimes i would  
like to escape from here  
sometimes i cry  
in my room  
because i know  
what i did is wrong

-Luis

**From The Beat:** You can turn your pain to gain if you remember these tears after you're free again to make better decisions then.

### I Wish I Was Out

I wish I was out of Juvenile Hall because I could be home on my own comfy bed instead of sleeping on a hard ass mattress, or wearing other people's shirts, pants, shoes, socks, and dirty underwears, and have to shower with four different person next to you.

All that... I just wish I could be at home!!!

-Quack Quack

**From The Beat:** When you get released, can you remember the things you dislike about Juvenile Hall and promise yourself that you'll never come back? More importantly, can you keep your promise?

### Eighteen Already

I wish I was out there in the streets with my friend doing good.  
But not with my father.  
I wish I was eighteen already.

-Mayra

**From The Beat:** We wish you wrote a little more. You'll be back on the outs before you know it. And you'll be eighteen before you know it. In life we all have obstacles, we define ourselves by how we choose to deal with them. What kind of person do you wanna be?

### The Streets, I Wish I Was

I wish I was in the streets doing coo', living the life how it's supposed to be lived, not here in CYA.

Oh! If you're wondering, I came back from the "Y" for court. I'm going back to finish my time. If I do coo', I get out next year.

Anyways, as I was saying, I wish I was in a time machine and could go back in time to correct all the bad stuff that I did in life. Well, I am sorry to cut it short, but I am at lost for words.

Till pencil meets paper again. I would like to send respect and love to my cousin Ben.

-Eric

**From The Beat:** Do you wish you could undo the wrong because you're facing hella time or because you've hurt someone? If you were free right now, what would you be doing?

### 1 Wish 1 Was Out

I wish I was somewhere and I probably would be wit' a girl right now having sex. Ha, ha. Anyways, me and my friend is in here together and we going to do a few.

I probably would be playing football right now. If I get out — that's doing a good job at it too. I can do anything I put my mind to. My family is doing bad but just now.

My sister's name is Tewanna; she is a little bit older than me. I hear she may be coming. My girl's name is Gerwona and she is at home and I will marry her one day.

-Deonte

**From The Beat:** We had a hard time transcribing your short missive but we did the best we could. Since you are missing out on so much, when you get out, what will you be doing to make sure that you're not taking your freedom for granted?

### I Wish I Was. . .

I wish I were out of the Hall, with my family, and with my girl, and handling my business on the outs to ensure me not coming here again.

-Ashton

**From The Beat:** Good. Wishing is the first step. Planning is the next, and then comes doing. You can do it. Handle it!

### I Wish I Was Free

i wish i was in south san francisco  
i wish i was wit' my homies  
i wish i was wit' my family  
i wish i was kickin' it wit' some females  
most of all i wish i could  
be there when my baby's born

-Young Smokey

**From The Beat:** You claim you're not a gigolo. Yet you want to be kickin' it with some females though. That baby needs you to grow up fast — be more mature than you ever have been in the past.

### My Own World

I wish I were in my own world, free of the tragedy, and drama of life. A place where I can go to get away from everyone else and no one can disturb my mental and spiritual being.

-Shorty

**From The Beat:** Can you go to that place while you're in the Hall? Have you ever tried meditating?

### I Wish I Was

I wish I was  
On the other side of the fence  
I wish I was  
On the other side of my door  
I wish I was  
Out on the street  
I wish I was  
Able to eat what I want  
I wish I was  
FREE!  
I wish I was...  
I wish I was...  
I wish I was....

-Big Samoa

**From The Beat:** If you try hard enough, maybe your wishes will come true. How can you make sure that when you get out — you stay out? When you are released, how can you make sure that you don't take your freedom for granted?

### I Wish

I wish that I was free so that I can be with my family and my girl and just chill all day with them and have no worries or any problems. But I guess that's just going to be a wish — not reality.

-Lil' Carlos

**From The Beat:** Sometimes you can make your wishes come true. If you want to be with your family then you just have to take your freedom seriously. Freedom is a privilege — not a right.

## i would like to escape from here

## "I Wish I Was. . ."

### I Wish ... I Wish ...

i wish i was at home  
i wish i would have changed my tone  
i wish i could pick up the phone  
now i'm locked up in a cell  
smellin' the same old county smell  
i chose the game of the streets  
kickin' it and selling tweek  
now my body is weak  
i'm ready for a change  
i wish i was at home  
i wish ... i wish ...

-Baby Gurl

**From The Beat:** While this is no place you would choose to be, it's still a place where you can work on your recovery. That's the only way, to get home — and be home to stay! When you change Baby Gurl, you will have changed your whole world.

### I Wish For Change

i wish i could be  
a good role model  
for my brother  
i wish i could be home  
i wish for the finer things  
i wish i could change  
my anger but  
how can i change  
my anger when i been through  
too much shhh to change  
that's why i'm in  
this predicament  
but i wish that  
one day everything  
will change to the way  
i want it

-Dinesha

**From The Beat:** No matter what you've been through or how much you've been through, you can change — not everything, not all at once; but little by little, day by day, you can change the way you think and act and feel. Some days your anger will hold you, and some days you'll hold your anger. But the only way to change "everything" — is to begin a change in you.

### I Wish It Wasn't the Way It Is

i wish i was free  
i wish i could be with my family  
i wish i could wake up when i want  
and take a shower as long as i want  
i wish ninja would stop hating on me  
i wish there were no snitches  
i wish they'd all shut their lips  
i wish that when i get out i stay you  
i wish the police would stop messing with me  
i wish that all my ninjas were still alive  
i wish we did not have to die  
but that's just the way it is

-Kalvin

**From The Beat:** Don't wait for the police to grant you immunity. You need to change what you do in your community. You won't be on the list of the next snitch if you can just quit and go legit.

### I Miss Home

i wish i was at home  
with my mom  
and the rest of my family  
i miss my house

-Victor

**From The Beat:** You will be home. Till then, hold on.

### i wish

i was in newark  
with some hynas  
soakin'em an' jus'  
blowin' in the wind

-Young Lazy

**From The Beat:** Stay chill and you will, just don't freeze!

### I Wish, I Will

i wish i was never in the system  
i wish i was someone who would think before reacting  
i wish i had my real mom and dad in my life  
i wish i could make better choices  
i wish i was perfect  
i wish that everything would go my way  
i wish that i could get out and never return  
— i will get out and never return  
because i'm tired of living this life  
(what up to my boy kasper at camp)

-Lil' June

**From The Beat:** How can you hang at the park with Kasper and the homies, yet expect not to smoke like a dummy? You keep trying to play it with one foot in and one foot out, and that strategy will never make your wishes become realities.

### What I Wish

I wish I was home with my boo, makin money doin' it live. But now I'm up in here with these fake females, tellin' they lil' war stories.

I wish I was with my husband and my step-daughter at the park or something.

Then to make it worst I haven't got an interview and the Summer Jam is comin' up. It's cool 'cause my boo write me everyday and I talk to him every other day, so he keep me calm.

He's the reason I'm holdin' up and goin crazy. It's cool; I can't be in here forever. I gotta keep my head up and stay stunnin, 'cause it's nothin to a boss.

-Lil' Mama

**From The Beat:** Lil' Mama, you ain't gonna be in there forever, as long as you start making positive decisions, and showing a little patience. You'll be surprised how far patience will take you. Keep your head up boss.

**i wish that  
everything would  
go my way**

### 1 Wish 1 Was....

I don't believe in wishing because I know from experience, wishing don't take you nowhere. Don't wish. Make something happen yourself.

Some people want certain things like money, for example. You can't just sit around wishing for money because you ain't gonna get it that way. To be honest, you better get a job, hustle, or rob someone if you want money.

-Lil' Samoa

**From The Beat:** Okay, we agree with you, wishing won't get you everything you want. People need to step up and work hard for what they want. A job, a hustle (a legal one) are good ways, but, come on now! Robbing someone is not good advice, especially coming from someone in the Hall. What you think?

### Make Time Fly

I wish I could hurry up and get out of here and go to the house.

I wish I was on the turf with my homeboy kickin' it and soakin' 'em.

I wish I was with my family but most of them locked up like I am.

I wish I was off probation and at the house.

I wish I was with some females at my house.

-Green Eyes

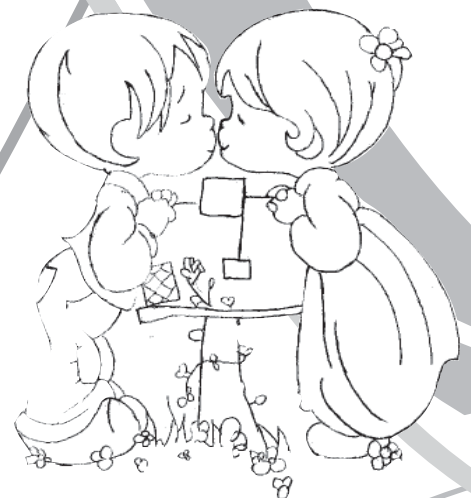
**From The Beat:** You know these things don't have to be wishes. When are you gonna change your lifestyle so that some of your wishes can come true? You can't keep doing the same shhh and expect different results, so what's it gonna take?

### Almost Free

i wish i was free  
'cause right now  
i would either be  
smokin' some elgee  
or be drinkin' on some remy  
ya feel me  
to all y'all in the hall  
i was just in max four  
like four months ago  
and now even though  
i'm at camp sweeney  
surrounded by hella weenies  
that tryin' a act hard  
pull these ninja's ho' card  
but it doesn't even matter  
'cause i'm 'bout to get out  
so j-cat ninjas  
better hush thei' mouth  
and i'm out

-Lil' Ant

**From The Beat:** That's right, when a foo' bumps his gums, you don't need to bite. But watch that Remy and LG, if you want to stay free; all right?



### Mighty Mouse

I wish I was at the house right now, talking to my lil' one.

I'm tired of coming up in here and doin' time, but I keep puttin' myself in this situation. It's nothin', though 'cause I'm gone get out of here one day. They can't hold me down forever, but while I am in here, I'm gone hold it down and think about where I came from, and how I'm gone try to stay out of the way of the law.

-Mighty Mouse

**From The Beat:** Hmm, Mighty, you can make it to the top. You say you came from the bottom, okay, well, recognize that. But also recognize what you go to do to be on top. When we talk about being on top, we mean on top of your decisions, on top of your life. In control. You make the decisions. You obviously don't want to be in the Hall. Stop putting yourself in that situation. Be on top of it!



## On The Way Home

I wish I was on the way home so I can be with the people I love because this is not a way to live. I am a man myself, and that is not right to ask another man can I use the bathroom. A man tell you when you can eat, when to go to sleep.

I miss things like waking up at about 2:30 a.m. and going to the refrigerator and getting something to eat. The thing I miss the most is sleeping with my baby's mother, and waking up whatever time I want to.

I just want to chill with a few of my homies and sit back and drink Monet and smoke a blunt after so I can be so high I can piss on the clouds.

-Da Hitta B4

**From The Beat:** We feel you when you say you miss your freedom, but we wonder whether you're going to risk losing it again if your goals are to hang with your homies, get hella drunk and smoke hella weed. Did any of that behavior contribute to getting you to the hall? If you have a baby, what responsibility do you think you have towards his/her upbringing? What are your priorities, and does having a child change them? You say, "I'm a man myself..." What does it mean to be a man?

## "I Wish I Was. . ."

### I Wish

I wish I were out living my life under my mom's rules. I hate the hall's rules. But I got to abide by them 'til I'm released; I'm not trying to get any room time.

Right now I don't have a roommate, so it be boring when I am in my room. Man, I miss my little brothers hella bad.

-Jb B4

**From The Beat:** We're curious to know whether you liked living by your mom's rules when you were at home, or whether you realized how much better her rules were than the ones you have to live by now. In other words, is this one of those examples of you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone? Well, now that you know, what are you going to do differently when you get home to your mom and your little brothers (who look up to you)?

### I Wish I Was . . .

I wish I was a little girl again where my mother used to take me to school, brush my hair, pick my clothes. When I didn't have to worry about boyfriends, brothers, and sisters and I used to be that one spoiled little girl that used to get everything I wanted and get away with all that trouble I used to get into and stay away from YGC, because it sucks in here.

-Payasa GU

**From The Beat:** It's funny how we always want to be older when we're young, and then when we get older, we want to be younger. It's always good being a child, but the time comes for everyone to grow into adults. Right now should be the time for you to focus on doing things to better your life. What will it take for you to stay out of trouble instead of just hoping you'll get away with it?

## I Wish I Never Came To Juvenile

I wish I never came to juvenile because every time I violate my probation and I be detained. I be missing out on a lot of stuff and missing my family and my homies.

But sometimes I look at me being in here as a good thing because I know I'm safe and I don't have to worry about nobody coming up behind me and trying to do something to me.

But I wish I never come back here. I rather be with my friends and family than being with people I don't know. So I'm going to try my best to make my wish come true and get out the system.

-Tweety B2

**From The Beat:** Sounds like you know what's up, but we're wondering what you're going to do about the folks you feel may be trying to come up behind you. Can you start living a safer life, so Juvenile doesn't seem even a little bit good? Can you stay with your family more, spend more time with folks who don't get into trouble?

## Don't Fake The Funk

I wish that people took life serious so we could all get along. I think if these ninjas took life serious, they would not play with their life by tryin' the hop into stuff with ninjas that feel they don't have shhhh the live for. Some may be faking the funk, and it will show when the shhhh hit tha fan, because by that time you will be smelling their blood.

-Pg B4

**From The Beat:** We agree, PG, but we still want to know how you move from a person that doesn't take life seriously, to one that does? What needs to happen for that change to take place?



### I'm Wish

I wish I was out of here, back on the street tasting air

I wish I could fly

Out this world in the open sky.

I wish I had money

Then I wouldn't have to rob nobody.

I wish I could turn back the hands of time

So I wouldn't have to sit here makin' this poem rhyme.

There are a lot things people wish they could do

But in the end it's all up to you.

-Chinatown B2

**From The Beat:** Good rhyme, Mark. We like the image of you tasting fresh air. Since your future's up to you, what are you going to do to make it one that doesn't include the Hall?

## I Wish, I Wish

I wish I was home smoking. I love to smoke. I wish I had a degree in electronics so I would be able to offer a different tray of knowledge. I wish I could be released or sent somewhere where all people want to see me do good. I wish my heart would allow me to love all. I wish that I never lost anyone I loved.

I wish my dad were still alive. I wish my big cousin were still alive. I wish my brother were still here. I miss my brother Dre, Joe and Mike. I love y'all. I'll always be here loving you.

-Pg B4

**From The Beat:** We like your list of wishes, PG. (We have to say, however, that if you put smoking at the top of your list, it will just make it that much harder to achieve the others — partly because once you start smoking, it's hard to stop...) We also wish you hadn't lost anyone you love, but we hope those tragic experiences can help you choose a better path that will lead you out of places like this.

**I wish I knew what I was facing, how much time or how much longer I had to be here.**

## Not-Getting Out

I wish I was at home with the people that I really care for or people I know, instead of being here with people I don't know or care for. I don't really stress in here because without school, and if I was out free, I would probably be in here anyway. But I wish my case wasn't so serious.

I wish I knew what I was facing, how much time or how much longer I had to be here. I been here five months. I was supposed to be out two months ago, but the day before I got out, I caught another case, and it's ten times as serious as what I came for. It's a 707, which means they're trying to charge me as an adult.

-123 B4

**From The Beat:** Well, if you caught another case the day before you got out, it doesn't sound like you were wishing to be home hard enough. What do you mean, "...if I was out free, I would probably be here anyway?" Does that mean you can't be free without doing the things that lead you to jail? If that's true, you'd better prepare yourself for long stretches of time where you allow the system to be your slave master. On the other hand, you could be thinking about ways to live on the outs that don't threaten your freedom.

### Wish

I wish I was at home because I could have been doing something with ninjas or you know who, and I would have been going on vacation with the homies, doing it real big, but I'm not. I'm here writing for The Beat.

-J-Stub B2

**From The Beat:** Yes, you could have been doing those things, but we wonder if any of those things could have brought you to the Hall, too. Do you think you're going to need to change anything in order to stay out of the system?

**I wish my heart would allow me to love all.**

## Take It Over

I wish I was out of here because I want to go home and see my family and friends. I made a mistake, and now I'm in here. I wish I could take that day over. When I get out, I would stay good and think before I act.

-Andrew B2

**From The Beat:** We think you should take this piece and tape it on your mirror at home so you look at it every day before you leave the house, then we won't have to see you again in the Hall.

## "I Wish I Was. . ."

### I Wish

I wish, I wish, I wish... I'll wish for how many wishes do I have. If it's one then I'll wish for infinity wishes to wish for everything.

A wish to be free, that's a waste because I am already free in the mind, but I'll wish for peace!

-Jd B5

**From The Beat:** Are you wishing for world peace, or your own, personal peace of mind?

### My Mom's Real Home Cooking

I wish I was at home in my bed. I will be in my own bed in a few days.

I wish I was eating my own food, because the food we eat is fake. The fish is rubbery here and I did not eat it. I had pizza. I wish I was at home eating my mom's cooking. She cooks every food. My favorite food is fried chicken, hamburgers, tacos and sweet potato pie. I will have all of that when I leave! 'Til next time if I am still here.

-Sean B1

**From The Beat:** Stop! You're making us hungry! What was so worth doing that you messed up and are now missing all that great home cooking, Sean? Is your mom teaching you to cook when you're home? What is your specialty? Can we all come to your house for dinner the first night you go home so you can hook us up with your mom's best home cooking? It's on!

### A House Is Not A Home

I wish I was not in YGC. I wish I was at home. I used to run the streets. For example, I used to stick and move to a girl's home or to the mall, and I didn't come home straight home after school. I would come home like around 9:45pm every day, but I just want to go home and sit on my living room couch and just relax and watch TV.

-Ken B4

**From The Beat:** Can you see a connection between running the streets (not going home) and the trouble you got yourself into? How much do you wish you were not here? Enough to give up running the streets? Think about it.

### I Wish I Was!

I wish I was with my family  
I wish I was with my girl

I wish I was out at home with both of them  
Instead of being in here with a whole bunch of boys  
I am tired of showering with boys all of the time  
I get tired or the same faces in my face every day

-B-love B1

**From The Beat:** Nice writing. It must be frustrating to see the same faces and hear the same rap every day. Do you think the boys in Juvy with you get tired of your face? What can y'all do to make your time in Juvy more fun and rewarding? What about some humor? Telling funny stories. What about making some new friends? When you're on the outs, don't you see the same faces every day there, too?

### I Wish I Was Out

I wish I was out of Juvenile. I can't stand this place. I'm depressed, angry, and I'm feeling like I will never get out. I just feel like if I was given a second chance, I wouldn't make this mistake again.

While I wait in Juvenile Detention for my court date, I just gotta be cool with my surroundings. This place has broken my soul and has drove me crazy being confined.

-John B5

**From The Beat:** Have you ever heard of a Catch-22? The original Catch-22 was the dilemma of a soldier in World War II who tried to say he was crazy in order to get out. But the rules were that if you wanted to get out, that proved you could not be crazy! So, even though you say this place is driving you crazy, the fact that you want out of it proves you're not!

### I Want My Time Back

I wish I was outside of this Hall, because this is not the place for us, because they call us when to get up out of bed, call us when to go to sleep. But it's on us, because we did the crime. Just like I'm going to do the time, because time is a big word and I'm trying to get my time back one way.

-Lil' Clap B1

**From The Beat:** What does it mean to "do the time?" Do you like to read? Write? Draw? Learn what life is like for the youth in Juvy with you? Use your imagination! See what you can come up with! Juvy time doesn't have to be dead time.

### My Family Needs Me

I wish I was at home with my family, including my girlfriend, Remmy, so I can take care of my family, instead of being in here. I know my family needs me on the outs to keep them safe from harm. I don't know what I'll do if something happens to my nieces and nephews. I'll snap, then catch another case. That's why I wish I was at home.

-J-Money B1

**From The Beat:** What you can do best to help your family is to get out of Juvy and stay out of trouble, J-Money. Even though your intentions to protect your nieces and nephews is wonderful, it doesn't help them if you hurt someone for their sakes and end up back in Juvy, or jail. Can you show them that all work is honorable by getting a job? Can you show them you don't have to have an illegal hustle to get a good rep and some cash? Can you show them that if you use your intelligence, imagination and willingness to work hard, that you can succeed and excel on your own terms? Oh, yeah, and can you show yourself the same things?

### 1 Wish...

I wish I was free right now 'cause I been down for a hot one, locked down in B5 and Log Cabin Ranch. This jail time was nothin' 'cause I knocked it out.

I'm finna be out in them streets thizzed out pretty soon though. Can't wait till I throw these Log Cabin Ranch County clothes in the trash and skirt off. Ha Ha Ha.

But for right now I gotta go back to my maximum security cell up here in B5. Time for lock down!

-Jr B5

**From The Beat:** Let's see if we can understand: You're wishing you were free so that you can go back to the streets to start thizzin'. Is that right? If so, we'd say you're not only "finna be out in them streets thizzed out," but you're really finna to come back to the Hall. Now that you've seen where your act gets you, why not try a new act?

### If Only

I wish I was never in this situation I'm in now. I wish I would have stayed in the house with my wife Sadie, and I would never be in here. I wish I was out of the city, because the city is a trap for youth with nothing going good for them like school, community, work. We just fall victim to the streets.

Why wish when I can do? So I am going to do better fo' myself, get my life together before I fall victim to the street. No one wants that.

-Ar B5

**From The Beat:** We're not sure why school, community and work would be better in some other city. All those things exist here, so what makes it a trap? We also see many young people falling victim to the street, but then, we also see young people who live in the 'hood making it through hard work at home and at school, who manage to get up and get out without going to jail. How do some fall to the streets, while others overcome?



### Mind Reader

I wish that I can read people's minds sometimes to see what they be thinking when they zone out or stare at the floor or the wall looking in outer space.

-Jon Jon B4

**From The Beat:** This is an interesting wish, Jon Jon. Do you ever zone out or stare at the walls or floor? What are you thinking when you do? What do you think other people are thinking

**I just gotta be cool with my surroundings**



## Dead Alive

So many friends lost  
What's the final cost?  
Bullets flying by my head  
Ask Mista Wigi, "When I be dead?"  
Mom's cryin her eyes out  
Scared my brains gonna fly out  
People talk of change  
But that seems so far and strange

-Orlando

**From The Beat:** When we experience the death of loved ones, our own immortality becomes more real. Change can seem strange and scary because we do not know what to expect from a different way of life. Could your talents possibly offer you a future you could now only imagine? It will take huge amounts of courage to pursue another lifestyle, but you are courageous enough to put your thoughts into flows, and that's a beginning. Courage is not the absence of fear, but acting in the face of fear.

## It's Dangerous When . . .

It's dangerous when  
you get all messed up.  
You try to sell some drugs,  
and dip from slugs.  
The cops heard your name  
in a killin' fo' cocaine  
so they think it was you  
'cause they know you dope slang.  
They say "Kill at first sight."  
When they see the whites of your eyes,  
you thinkin' you gonna die.  
And it started from a lie,  
but you keep doing that G.  
Now you paranoid as can be.  
They just found you and they point the .33,  
when they see your face, they see you RIP

-Louie

**From The Beat:** Scary piece, Louie. You may have good reason to be fearful about interactions with the police if you are involved in criminal activities. Are these fears you truly have or just what you imagine? If it's real, can you imagine yourself living a safer life? What would it take on your part?

## Life

When I die will I go to hell?  
Do better and act well  
Or will I do wrong  
And keep on singin' the same song?  
Thinking too much of the devil  
And I am known as a rebel  
I always do the opposite  
See what life gives me, see what I get

-Orlando

**From The Beat:** Nice job reviewing the past, the present, and imagining the future, and this piece could hardly be more different from the last one you wrote. You are wondering what direction your life will take, and that, as you know, is on you. Do you like what you are getting right now for the decisions you've made? What would your life look like if you were a rebel for a more positive cause?

## Chillin' In My Room

Kickin' it in my room . . .  
Thinking, why am I here  
and how I can change my ways?  
But when you get out, it's not the same  
you always go back to your original ways.  
Just an immediate pleasure  
for long-term gain.  
When I am chillin' in my room

-Samuel

**From The Beat:** Being locked up gives you plenty of time to think, but when you are released, there are so many distractions and temptations. One key to change may be in a line in your poem: delayed gratification. When you say "No" to yourself and decide to wait for something over time, you develop patience. When you are locked up, you are FORCED to be patient. Can you CHOOSE to be patient (on the outs) and stop to think about the consequences of your actions? If you do so, you may avoid being locked up again, one choice at a time.

## Thinking Of You In Durango

Thinking of you every night  
Back in Durango for the fifth time.  
Out on the streets busting crimes  
Staring at walls, hope soon I will survive  
I just miss staring at your beautiful eyes  
Being lucky, you are mine.  
Thinking of you twenty-four/seven  
'Cause you're my angel that came down  
from heaven.  
I close my eyes and I think of you  
If I were out, all the wonderful things  
we could do.  
I am your king and you're my queen  
But soon we will be together when I get released  
You're the one that still keeps me alive  
You give me consejos that would help me in life.  
I never told you I felt this about you, girl  
You mean everything to me in this world!

-Moises

**From The Beat:** A very poetic, beautiful piece, Moises. The mind is powerful and can stir images and emotions that are beautiful. How can you use your mind during your time in Adobe to build yourself a future worth living? Will you allow these feelings to spur you on to a life of possibilities? You decide with each opportunity you face and each choice you make.

## To The One I Love

Babe, I love you. You are my dream.  
All I mean is that you had set me free  
from all the bad things  
Even though we fight and argue, I still love you  
I wish I could hug you and tell you how I feel  
about you  
I get so sad when I call you  
and tell you that I am so sorry for ignoring you  
when you used to tell me that was wrong.  
I still ignored you and told you to lay off, so  
forgive me.  
Don't leave me. I will change  
and be a different man to my dream of love  
I promise love  
and call you my wife till the day I die

-Gerardo

**From The Beat:** Intense writing. Love can be a very intense feeling, particularly when we are separated from the one(s) we love. Will you allow love for a girlfriend, yourself, your family to give you the motivation you need to pursue a future outside these brick walls?

## Santa Cruz

### That Point

I've reached the point where I've said, "I just don't care", meaning, about myself. I was at the point where I didn't care about me or my family. I didn't feel there was any love there. I'd been using drugs for three years. I'm 15 now. I started smoking weed when I was 8 or 9. Meth and coke were my drugs. Like I said - I used them for three years. But I'm clean now. I've been clean for two months. It feels good.

I've regained the trust of my family, to an extent. But back when I didn't care about myself I didn't care whether I lived or died. I remember holding my breath, thinking maybe I could die. But I couldn't hold my breath that long. I was thinking - nobody loves me. I guess I knew people cared, but I didn't think they cared that much. Probably being locked up saved my life. It gave me time to think about a lot of things, including my brother - what he'd think if I killed myself. I could imagine him answering his friends' questions and having to tell them I was gone.

Being in my room made me think about my mom and my family. I'm the youngest daughter. My mom has been through a lot. We were homeless for a while. When I get out this time I hope to go back to drug court. I want to graduate and pay my restitution, and get back in school and prove myself - to everyone - my brothers and sisters and my mom and myself.

-Jasmine

**From The Beat:** A good story, well told. This is inspiring. Keep writing, Jasmine. Why do you think doing time doesn't help certain people? What was the most life changing part of your incarceration? Where do you see yourself five years from now? What do you want to do with your life and how do you plan to get there?



## My Story

What's up Beat Within? Today I would like to tell you about me hoping to do a good job at my group home.  
When I get out I want to find a girl. I want a wife and a kid. I just can't wait for the day to come when I can listen to my music - my Triple Six Mafia and Project Path.

-Rick

**From The Beat:** Will you be ready to support a family when you get out of the group home? Will you be ready to support yourself? How will you do it?

**I want to graduate and pay my restitution, and get back in school and prove myself - to everyone - my brothers and sisters and my mom and myself**



## Who Was Here Before Me?

Sometimes I do wonder who been in this four-cornered cell. Probably it was one of the homies, 'cause of the tagging on the walls

If each tag represents one person, there must have been a lot of homies from the block in room five. Wonder if they were my age and what year they came. It could be OGs, who knows? And wonder what and how they got caught up.

-J B1

**From The Beat: Can you feel from your cell what the previous occupants were going through—loneliness? Fear? Sorrow? Anger? Sometimes buildings seem to emanate the emotions of their inhabitants. What feelings do you think you'll leave behind you for new youth to intuit?**

## Sweet Dreams OC

I still can't believe that you're gone. I remember when we used to have our late night talks. I didn't want to face the fact that you wouldn't be around anymore. Deep inside I feel that my heart has been torn. I hope you're resting in peace in heaven with God that promises you eternity.

I cry and cry and I know that one day I will be all right. I keep on reminiscing on the past that we had together and just to let you know, I will never say goodbye forever. Sweet dreams, cousin, RIP Octavio Ocampo 1986- Jan/18/04

-Alicia GU

**From The Beat: We are very sorry to hear about your friend/cousin and we send our respects. Do what you have to do mend your heart. One thing that's good is talking and writing about these things. Maybe you can even help someone think twice about getting him of herself in a similar situation. Has Octavio's death made you more or less attached to the lifestyle you're living?**

## In My Cell

In my cell, well it ain't hell. It's somewhere I go to spend time to let my mind explore. My body is trapped, but my mind is free. I could just be sitting there, visualizing myself under some palm trees with my female having...

-Jd B5

**From The Beat: Having a nice conversation? Having a cool drink? Having another dream...?**

## That Time

Well, this is young baby, Estrella, from the girls unit. Well, I just wanted to drop my last lines 'cause I'm getting out on July 23rd, so I guess I'm real happy to leave 'cause it's been 7 1/2 months I have been down, so I guess it's my time to leave. I'm going to Delancey and I will be getting out of my program on July 23, 2006.

So I just want to thank The Beat Within for always being there for me and always holding me down for everything. By the time you probably read this, I will be gone, but I'll miss you.

One love, Estrella. RIP OC, Sav, Chucky, and Caballo.

-Estrella GU

**From The Beat: We are very proud of you and we'll miss you a lot. Stay focused on what you have to do in life and in your program. We all know it'll be tough, but we also know how tough you are. You have already come a long way, so keep moving on. It seems like you have a lot of people that look up to you so be an example not a statistic. Stay away from negative elements. Learn from Delancey, but be ready for it.**

## My Grimy 707

What's good wit' you Beat? As y'all know it's Young Fatz, and I'm speakin' my mind once again.

Well let me tell y'all dis. Last week I went to court for my 707 and straight lost my shhh! The judge told me that I ain't fit to be in Juvenile, so therefore I'll be on my way to 850 in September on my 18 birthday.

They say that I can be rehabilitated, but I need to be charged as an adult. They gave me a bail so I'll be touchin' grounds in a minute. Until then I'm gon holla at y'all in a minute. Stay up.

-Young Fatz B5

**From The Beat: We're so sorry you lost your 707, Young Fatz. From where we sit, you're definitely a kid (a big kid, a good kid, a smart kid, but a kid), but the system doesn't see the side of you that we see. We have just one word of advice: when you're out on bail, DO NOT commit another offense...**

## Ghost Of Cellies Past

In SF Juvenile Hall, unit B3/GU, there are 20 cells, but there is this certain cell, that I was put in. The room is unique because it is the only room that has a toilet and a sink.

Well, once upon a time, I was sitting in my cell in the middle of the night when all of a sudden I started to feel goosebumps all over my body, and the room started to get real cold. And all of the sudden I started to remember that one day a staff told me that there was a boy that tried to kill himself. So all of a sudden, I started to get paranoid and I turned around and my wall had perspiration on it. So I started getting scared, so I changed rooms . . . (To be continued.)

-Estrella GU

**From The Beat: We feel you, that is a very scary story. We look forward to hearing what happened next.**



## Wannabe's

Why dudes play games?

'Cause they young minded and insane

They just want to play the role of a rapper and have a fake rap name

They don't know the meaning of a pimp or a playa

They just call theyselves a playa to move on to pimp

And when you call me a trick,

You always wanna hit

And believe when you hit

I get my stick

So keep it gangsta, but you gonna change and get sick

And you know you tryin' to be Tupac or 50 cent

So stop acting and keep it rich just like Richey Rich

So keep it one cent and get a life and a job

And stop acting like a pimp.

-Shay GU

**From The Beat: We really feel this piece. Don't even give those wannabe's any attention if they're not good for you. All they will do is try to bring you down to their level. How can you learn from wannabe's? Are there many real dudes that you can write positive about? We would like to hear about them, too.**

## New Age Thugs

What's really with these New Age thugs? Now I ain't really out there like that, but at the same time, I ain't no New Age thug.

What I think and I feel is a New Age thug is these boys. I don't know if it's some New Age females like these New Age thugs I'm talking about.

If you read this and don't know what I'm talking about, it's these young cats that get locked up for a misdemeanor, then telling anybody who would listen to them how they shot up San Francisco. I'm telling you about these New Age thugs. Stop talking playboy. We males not females.

-Leek B5

**From The Beat: You're beginning to sound like one of those old men who complain about "the younger generation." Anyway, we understand what you're trying to say, except for the last line. What difference does it make if you're male or female — fronting is fronting.**

## A Blast

When it's time to come out I be like, "Damn!"

Then I realize I'm not free

So I just let it be

And stay on my Ps and Qs

And following them rules

Then I find out Mr. Merv used too live in my room

We all got something in common

From Merv to L-Burna to me, JD

We all got pull

-Jd B5

**From The Beat: We hope you can show just how much you have in common with Mr. Merv. He's come a long, long way since he was a resident where you are now. If you make the lifestyle changes he made, then we'll know just how much you have in common!**

## Rock Solid

I'm solid as a rock

Rock solid I am

You can't be soft in these streets

'Cause soft ones get put to sleep

That's why I maintain solid as a rock

And hope I don't be the next ninja

That get shot and drop

So I'm gon stay Rock Solid

Rest in peace to all the rock solid fallin' soldiers.

-Lil' Turk B5

**From The Beat: You may hold yourself in such a way that people believe you're rock solid, but we recognize the camouflage. We know you can be as solid as a rock when it's called for, but we also know that deep down, there is a boy's soft heart that hurts in private. When you're really rock solid, then you'll be able to expose some of that tenderness (which is very far from weakness) without fear.**

## What Real

All I wanna say is keep ya head up and never give up. Man, this is a cold game, so learn how to play it. Don't let these people play you, make 'em look crazy by doin' right, feel me? Holla.

-Nettety Bo GU

**From The Beat: True! We hope you are taking your advice. The game is cold and it's even colder in these times because there are no rules to it.**

## Why dudes play games?

**'Cause they young minded and insane**

**You can't be soft in these streets  
'Cause soft ones get put to sleep**

## Dedicated To A Firme Ruca

Once upon a tiempo, when I was stayin' in Napa up in a grupo, I met this one hyna (girl). My first impression on her was, damn, esta morra esta medio loca (this girl is half crazy) or sumthin', pero in a good way, reminds me of myself. . .

Well yeah, so after a time, we became coo' and pretty close. Damn, cuando me acuerdo (when I reminisce) we would stay up hella late causing demadres (mess) all up and down the hallways, having hella fun, and when I would feel down, me digo no te aguitas porque el que se aguita pierde" (she told me, don't worry, because the one who worries loses out). Damn, that's real serio.

So I told her, I have yo' back fo' whatever — money, advice, lo que sea me entientes? (whatever, feel me?) Or if you wanna bounce, you ain't gotta ask me twice so yeah, and the same with her. Pero the reason I write this is because we've been through some rough tiempos (times) too, but we still standing como dice "como soldados parados" simon (standing at attention like soldiers).

But yeah, I just want to say, Mona, I have much love for you, and always keep your head up. For sho', you know I'm down you and you for me. That's why mi respecto (my respect) will never change. But I know your situation, so I guess I should tell you mine. On the July 15th, I go to court. They're sending me to Colorado state for one year. Pero no me aguilto (but I'm not worried). I'll miss you y todo los homies (and all the homeboys). Me cae que voy estar muy lejos por un rato pero (It's bad that I'm going to be really far for a while). I'll be back and better than ever.

Well, you know that's about it, but it ain't over! Later days.

-Gata GU

**From The Beat: It's always great to have a good friend, especially when you're in a placement. Can you imagine knowing this person in 10 years? What do you think you'll both be like? What do you hope you'll be doing?**

## Dedicated To My Homegirl

This goes out to my homegirl, Alicia. I just wanted to say thanks for being a true friend and for always holding me down. I hope that you remain true to yourself and don't let no one bring you down in this life. You have lots of talent, so I hope you it them for good.

To everyone that is stressing in the halls, just always remember that you need a friend by your side, and when you really have a true friend, you should never let go. Friendship is what keeps me going, so wherever you are, keep your head up.

-Estrella GU

**From The Beat: Those are some good word of advice; we hope Alicia takes them, and that you do, too. It is very hard to maintain composure without a good friend. We know you'll find more friends like that in your next program though it might take a minute. While you're waiting, depend on the friend who will never leave you — you.**



## Free Write

Friends! How many of us have them? These are the people we depend on, and when it hit the fan, they get further, feel me. When you in jail, they supposed to be the ones who holding it down for you, checking on moms, your brothers, sisters, and girlfriends and baby mamas.

They have another agenda though, 'cause they're checking out your baby mama all right — checking out how thick she done got since they're been sexing her 24/7. I don't know 100%, but it seems like someone is always telling me how messed up they got, smirked by a friend or girlfriend.

Why do we fall victim to the circumstances and fate as the next individual? Because, we put too much faith, in friends. We assume that because everything was peaches and cream when we are out, it will be the some when we get locked up. Wrong.

While locked up we don't know our fate, and depending on how serious the crime, we don't know what our future will hold and neither do our friends. They assume we'll be gone longer than we actually will, and they feel who better to meet our girl's physical and emotional needs, and cater to her ego than them. They think, "I was already feeling his girl, when he was out, but I am a sucka, so now dat he's gone, I can make dat move. Shoot, we already cool, and she's vulnerable right now, so all I have to do is play my cards right and seize the opportunity and it's official like a referee whistle."

To all who think this can't happen, think of all the times you called and her phone was off, the times you called and yo' homie was in the background unexpectedly, and she said, "We cool. We just came from a party," or we going here and there. You like, "It's cool. He the homie. He gon watch out for her." Yeah, so some other cat won't try to holla. I leave y'all with one message: "Don't believe the hype."

-Fro B4

**From The Beat: Well, Afro, we can't disagree that this happens, but do you think it always happens? Don't you think there are people in the world that are trustworthy, and that would never betray you? If not, maybe you need to find better friends. And why do you want to stress your friends out even more than they're already stressed out by putting the thought in their head that their girls are cheating on them? Is it possible that when your homie is there when you phone, he's doing exactly what your girl says he's doing? How long should a girl wait for her imprisoned boyfriend? If she waits forever, isn't she in jail too?**

## Wandering Mind

I'm lost in my cell. In my cell I never felt another person or any spirit in my cell. But I look around in my cell and read the art painted by others. When I seen it, I let my mind wonder about all of the time I was free an' in my jets. I let my mind drift into the good an' the bad. And I felt messed up about the choices I've made.

-Pg B4

**From The Beat: Well, the choices you've made have messed you up, even if we can understand the reasons you made them. Feeling bad about past decisions is only useful if it helps you to make good (or, at least, better) decisions in the future. We think that's where you're heading.**

## Try Something Different

Yo I just got off the phone and my mom told me that my PO told her that she wants me to go to a group home for six months. It got me mad as hell, but I dealt with it anyways.

As soon as I am done with everything, I am going to try something different to stay of trouble.

-Jb B4

**From The Beat: We're sorry about your PO's recommendation, but if you have to go to a group home, then make the most of it. (There's positive in every situation, just as there's negative.) When you say you're going to try something different to stay out of trouble, what do you have in mind?**

## A Part Of My Mind

I'm in the Halls, and the judge got yo' homie stressed out And this green and tan stuff got me ready to bust out They're tryin' to send me to Glen Mills for like 18 months

So that's why I'm blowin' smoke like a blunt

But I'm glad I'm in the Halls 'cause I might be dead

Every time I look grown, somebody out fo' my head

'Cause I'm a young Black man stuck in poverty

RIP Scharod and Ray Diddy

Holla at yo' boy

-Young Slim B4

**From The Beat: You may be a young Black man in poverty, but you're only stuck there if you don't make the effort necessary to get unstuck. Take advantage of everything Glen Mills has to offer, especially education, because that is the key to moving out of poverty in the direction you'd like to go. Good luck.**

## Hustle, Get A Job, Quit Hustling

What's really good with The Beat? Well, I just want to say that I ain't never been in a desperate situation as Lil' Johnny, but if I was, I would've hustled to get some money, and at the same time, lookin' for a job.

When I get a job, that's when I would quit hustling. That's my lil' thang. If I was desperate, I would hustle to get paid.

-Jay Baby B4

**From The Beat: You may not have been in the same kind of desperate situation as Lil' Johnny, but we bet you've been in your own desperate situations. How did you handle those?**

**To everyone that is stressing in the halls, just always remember that you need a friend by your side**



## I'm Stuck

My life is hanging on the line. I'm so stupid. How can I get in the system if I did not even get my residency yet? I have a meeting with the immigration coming up soon. I don't know what is going to happen. They can't send me back alone because I am just a minor, but I don't want them to send back my whole family.

I am stressing and I don't know what to do. I'm thinking that I should let my step mom adopt me. it will be a lot easier. I don't know if she would. I pray to God every night.

I'm stuck like Chuck.

-A-jax B4

**From The Beat:** This is a problem we don't read about very much in The Beat. Have you ever talked to your step mother about adopting you? What does she think about the idea? If you don't get deported, what could happen to you here? Has this experience caused you to think about your behavior, and your responsibility for being here? What changes do you anticipate making in your life?

## Ninjas Run

Ninjas run 'cause they a square  
Ninjas run 'cause they scared  
Ninjas run 'cause they steal  
Ninjas run 'cause they ill  
Ninjas run 'cause they smell  
Ninjas run 'cause they weak  
Ninjas run 'cause they unique

And that's too deep

When ninjas run the street,  
So read The Beat and stay in peace.

-Young Hitta B2

**From The Beat:** You tell us why folks are in the street, but we wonder what you think about the streets and the reasons for being out there. Is running the streets a good thing, a bad one, depends? Can you be out there without doing things that could lead to incarceration? Why do you run them?

**Tha feds have  
hit again, an'  
I'm not tryin'  
ta see my  
name on no  
ninja's report  
sayin' I did  
this or that.**

## Excerpt From A Love Letter

It seems as if my days come closer, the time draws tighter, my nights arrive slowly an' depart like a paralyzed snail.

As I spend time serving out my time, I break down the wrong stairs I climbed an' set the material together to build myself a bridge so I'll be forced to travel straight.

Our time is coming. Tha feds have hit again, an' I'm not tryin' ta see my name on no ninja's report sayin' I did this or that. I would like ta vision myself ballin' 'til my death an' not ballin' being the cause of my death. I will die, but I do not want it to be behind one's love of money.

I picture myself getting along with all, but a real vision of me being around everyone just isn't gonna happen. Not in this lifetime. Maybe tha next.

I don't buy into the government's lies about their participation in any helping of our community. I will handle my life as I see fit, within the boundaries of this world's laws.

-Pg B4

**From The Beat:** This sounds very positive and forward looking, PG. We hope that when you touch down, you'll be able to remember all this, because it's harder when you have the freedom to mess up than when you don't.

## Playing With Me

Man, they playing with me. Like shhh, they keep telling me that I'm gon' get out, but when I go down there, they be on some shhh talking about, "Come back next week."

But I really can't be mad because I did what I had to do to get myself here I have to sit down till they want me to go home.

-J-Stub B2

**From The Beat:** You're right, once you do something that gives the system the right to lock you up, you don't have much room to complain. At the same time, waiting and waiting around for a placement sucks. Good luck.

## My Ghost In The Past

I sometimes think when I get out if my lil' homies is going to be in the same room I was in. Trip, the way I'm in the same room my big homie was up in here.

I wonder what he was doing when he was here. How did he feel when he was here. Did he go through all this? What did he do to pass the time? Shhh, all this is a big time trip, the way this cycle got us all trapped.

The ghost of my past came back. He's the only friend I got in that box. His name is Shorty.

-Louie B5

**From The Beat:** Is Shorty a real person, or imaginary? What makes him your "only friend in that box?" Do you talk to him? What do you say?

## I Shouldn't Be Here

I shouldn't be here for something I did not do. I should be at home with my family. But I'm not. I'm going to get out today anyway. I should be rappin'; I'll do that when I get home.

I wonder about the person who did it, what is he doing?

-Earl B2

**From The Beat:** How did you get accused of something you didn't do, Earl? Wrong place, wrong time? You may want to think about this and try to surround yourself with people who keep their game legit.

## Be Real

The real is fake

The real is what you make

The real is weak

The real is what you take

The real is ill

The real is awake

The real is something that you can't play

The real is mad

The real is sad

The real is bad, like when you play tag

So stay real and don't stay fake

'Cause if you stay fake

The real will awake

So stay safe and beware of the real.

-Young-Hitta B2

**From The Beat:** Hmm . . . we're confused, is the real good or bad? And are you real or fake?

## I Need Help

I think I need help because I know when I get out I'm going to get that gun an' be back to myself. But they trying to give me 18 months in a group home, so it's gon be a long time before I can be myself. But when I get out I know I'm still gon be the same, so I know I need help.

-Lil' Dakota B4

**From The Beat:** What kind of help would keep you from going back for that gun? It sounds to us that you're setting yourself up for failure in the group home if you already know that nothing will change your behavior. We hope we're wrong, but we worry about you. Where has that gun got you so far?

**They can't send me back alone  
because I am just a minor,  
but I don't want them to send  
back my whole family.**

## Dear Lil' Bra

It's 2004, and about to be 2005, and I don't want no more of my ninjas dying, you feel me. so coo' that shhh down, and try to get on step 4. Don't be in there giving the staff a hard time, ninja, 'cause you is too old for that.

They got me up here, and we get to be like staff. We get to tell the kids to stop doing bad stuff. You know what I'm talking about. It's like when a kid say a bad word or something, we be like, "What's the norm of cursing?" They be like, "We don't curse." Then we say, "Change your behavior, please."

But anyways, do me a favor and be coo' in there. I know some staff be doing hella much, but feel, just deal wit' that shhh.

-Lil' Cec' B4

**From The Beat:** Sandwiched between some personal stuff in the beginning and threatening stuff at the end (we took it out), you spit some good advice. Of course, when you check kids to stop cursing (or any other behavioral change), it does no good at all if you violate your own warnings. Kids, like adults, learn by watching. If the rule of "do what I do" is correct, then how are you changing your own act so that youngsters following you will do the right thing?

## Lost In Love

Wow, I feel lost in love. My family and girl got me wantin' to do right. Why? Only love could be the reason. I guess Mama wasn't lying when she said love'll make ya do right.

-Pg B4

**From The Beat:** We can think of a lot worse places to be lost than in love. Love is powerful, all right, and can raise your spirits to the sky — or crash them down to earth. We hope you only have the first experience, but if you have the second, we hope it doesn't send you back to doing the things that got you here.



## The Best Rapper in The Beat

i can lay ya puzzle down  
like parts and pieces  
i'm glued to these lyrics  
like starch on creases  
rap about the elements  
the arts of jesu  
i program ya nephews  
and start'cha nieces  
i take it to the head  
'cause i heard ya thesis  
yo' mouth spells the gap  
the mike parts ya teeth in  
i pay for my funeral  
the coffin i rest in  
ya soul out there  
with the soft and the restless  
i won't snatch ya chain  
i might toss ya necklace  
too little man a skittle  
might cough ya chest in  
just came from ellay  
where i dissed an actress  
i got high-yellow skin  
like piss on a mattress  
you rap about turfs  
in the casket for hoppin'  
got thirty-one flavors  
like baskin robbins  
ain't neva held a chop  
meat cleava be choppin'  
stop runnin' ya mouth  
another way to get boxed in  
these boys got a spot  
fully named the rock's den  
it's scandalous you handle it  
or get chicken-pox'd in  
ya girl caught the flu  
now she sick up in stockton  
i know some disc jockeys here  
but the disc don't be jockin'  
a lot of chicks see troy  
and they stop and stare  
fade my hair like nelly  
girl it's hot in here  
while i stroll in the club  
ladies trot in there  
i go dumb they lean back  
and do the roc-a-wear  
yeah —

-Troy

**From The Beat: If you want to be the best in The Beat, educate your reader with something he needs. Rock a reader's reality; don't sound off like a Hollyrock wannabe. You've got skills but mentally fail to feel the genius of The Beat. You diss on the backs of your own community. What Beat readers need is directions to unity and a way up from these street-scandalous scenes of lunacy that give the system impunity. While your rhymes are fine and your rhythms sweet, it takes more than that to be best in The Beat.**

## Thursday's Court

This Thursday is my court date. The first court date I went to, didn't go my way.

They had detained me because they said I was a danger to myself. I've been praying all week for this court date to go my way. I hope they let me out!

I'm willing to go on probation for as long as they want. I'll do almost anything for me to be released. I really hope God and the judge show some sympathy and release me to my family so I can get myself together.

-Maseeh

**From The Beat: We hope you get the chance to prove you can live free responsibly, but you need to take a good, hard look at what ways you in fact do represent a danger to yourself by the choices you make and the actions you take. We don't say this to be mean, but out of sympathy — you feel! On the real.**

## 2600 Fairmont Drive, San Leandro

What's crackin'? Watchu doin'? It's me, Fat Juan. Ninja, that's scandalous, huh foo'? I'm in Juvenile Hall with hella folks from Newark, Decoto, Frisco and Hayward!

This is hella better than In-take though. I think I'm 'bouts to be safe in here for a minute.

I got assault with a deadly weapon, gang enhancement, and fighting in public. I hope I get out soon, but it's coo'. Well, I'm outs!

-Fat Juan

**From The Beat: When your highest loyalty goes to a prison gang, then prison is where you'll bang. And with great respects, The Beat Within is not a vehicle to say hello to your friends and associates. If you can't teach through your life experiences don't bother submitting pieces! Nothing, we repeat nothing, cool about incarceration!**

## Money Makin'

ninjas want to win if they could  
if a ninja's got to take three or four bullets  
fo' thirty thousand gees — i would  
you can't even walk down the street  
and see a penny and not pick it up  
'cause the ninja that's walkin' behind you  
gon' pick it up if you don't  
the game is all about money  
you can sell dope

or make a ninja put his face on the ground  
and it's gettin' so thick  
you can have yo' main girl on the stroll  
man it's r-o-b

and i'm gon' stay in the game  
until a ninja give me every bullet in a one-fifty clip  
ba ... ba ba ba ...

-Sticky Ricky

**From The Beat: Do these rhymes sound cool to you? To us, they make you sound like a fool. Maybe your brains will leak in the street, or maybe you'll stay with shackled feet. It's not easy to earn money legitimately, but it's worth it. Ya heard it!**

## Young Smokey's Intro

What's up wit' ya, Beat! It's ya boy, Young Smokey! Man, I ain't wrote nothin' for a hot one.

For y'all that don't know me, I'm the one and only Young Smokey from San Mateo County, know what I'm talking about! But anyway, man, I'm gonna be in here for a hot one — so I'll hit y'all later.

What's up to those in Hillcrest: Mousie, Chino, Nono, Lil' Ryno, Spookey The Dark One, Boon. Be cool an' get out!

To those in Camp Sweeney, keep ya heads up. Finish Camp, so y'all can get out and be with yo' family.

-Young Smokey

**From The Beat: It's not just about pimping Camp, but changing how you think and act — so you never have to come back.**

## How I Got Here

Man! I don't even know how I got here! Man, a few hours ago I was kicking back with the homies, doing the daily thing. You all know what I'm talking about.

Man! Now I'm in Juvenile Hall — and they're coming at me with these different charges! It's all good though, because I ain't trippin'.

Well, I'll holla. I'm outs. To all, stay up till next time. I'm outs.

-Fat Juan

**From The Beat: When all you do is slide on by, you think you're doing the system when the system's doing you — 'cause really you're reserving a room in a SHU if you never learn to change what you do.**

## My Life, My Life

my life was a good life  
until i came to juvenile hall  
and juvenile hall made it fall  
fall down to the ground  
falling till my pimping stopped  
once i stopped being a pimp  
it was a wrap — now i am  
a good man in god  
(thank you beat)

-Lil' Kev

**From The Beat: You don't have to be perfect to be a good man, but you do have to stop yourself as fast as you can when you see yourself heading back down that wrong track.**

## To the Contrary, Mija (Part One)

to the contrary mija  
of what ya might've heard  
that i be manipulatin' females  
to sleep wit' them and take the money they earn  
i understand ya concern i hear ya worries  
and i agree let's don't take this relationship in a hurry  
'cause you might give me what i want too quick  
and everything would be buried  
'cause everything is based on person an' attitude  
mija i'm tryin' to be more than just ya main dude  
i'm tryin' to be ya one an' only  
why should i give ya my feelings if ya creepin' wit' the homie  
to me that just show ya a hoe i ain't want to go  
that way wit' ya but here we go ...  
[to be continued]

-Young Smokey

**From The Beat: When you're locked up and all you hear is talk that's messed up, it's hard to know what is what — and the same goes for those you left behind, the words of others start to mess with their minds. Accusations won't heal any wounds. Just keep faith, take it day by day, and try to get home soon. 'Cause that baby will need a father who knows how to stay true, no matter what other folks say about her — or you!**

## Why Hate?

why do they hate  
on this here playa  
i think it's just  
'cause i'm a boss  
i get hated on a lot  
but it's nothin' to me though  
i'm a keep my head up though  
and keep on going  
like an energizer bunny

-Terrell

**From The Beat: Don't quit thinking about what has you sinking. When you're ready to see it's the game that's to blame — change your mentality, to change your reality.**

## My Girl

i have a girl  
her name is shanice  
she looks so good  
do you want a piece  
too bad  
you ain't gettin' none  
so if you try  
i'm gonna have you on the run  
when she ain't around  
my heart is torn  
it makes me feel  
like i was never born  
when she's around  
she makes me glad  
she makes me happy  
even when i'm mad

-Bilal

**From The Beat: Write a poem about what you need to do to stay free, 'cause as long as you're in here you can't be with Shanice. And even if she were gone, it's better to live on — free!**

## Why Fake and Hate?

why is all these haters  
playin' on a pimp  
and talking a lot of trash  
and when they walk up  
to the big boys  
they want to be somebody  
i think all people  
act fake in the world  
people just be dreamers  
why do people do a crime  
and cannot do the time  
like a real man can

-Kevin

**From The Beat: Dreams can be lies or true. It depends on what you dream and what you do. Blame the game. Dream yourself free of its false claims. Then maintain and remain free in reality.**

# My public pretender is talking about CYA time

## Right From Wrong

Well, I think to provide for your family in any way you can is right. Like me, some people struggle to get what they need to survive! If your family is struggling, I think it's right to rob or sell drugs. Shoot, me I am doing whatever I got to do to get money in my pocket!

I also think, as a gang member, it's right to smoke someone if they're gonna smoke you!

-Green Eyes

**From The Beat: Why do you think some people feel they have to go to the last resort when they struggle? Why do you think some people feel gang banging is wrong? Why do you think some people think selling drugs is wrong? Why do you think people think so differently? Do you ever wish you thought differently than you do?**

## To Those That Fell Into the System

I want to send my love to my carnals that just fell into the system. I heard they did some hot shhhh. I ain't mad at you. We all do what we gotta do.

To my loved ones, stay up and don't make it worse on yourselves. Stay safe. Don't let no one put you down or disrespect you. Keep your heads up, and stay in touch with those you love.

Man! My ninjas, I never thought you'd make it up here for a hot one! Don't trip. I'll probably see you soon, you know. But the way things be going, who knows?

But try to stay out of trouble and keep your minds straight. Forget everyone else. Stay strong. Stay together. Much love to you all. With love ...

-Lil' Jose

**From The Beat: If by "forget everyone else" you mean to disregard remarks designed to provoke you, right on! When you carry respect in your heart, no one can take it away. So ignore what a fool will do or say. And when you're out, so much of what you think you "gotta do" — you can do without!**

## The Dumb Choice I Made

I was at Camp Sweeney for about seven-and-a-half months, and I was supposed to do only six months. They kept adding thirty more days because of my behavior and my dirty drug tests.

I had a lot going on with my family, mainly my step mom and dad. So I went home on a home visit, and I had so much on my mind — I was stressing so much, I did not return to Camp.

Now I have to go back to Camp and probably do a couple more months, or a whole new program. Either one is fine with me — I just want to get out of the system and never return.

I hope I still have my spot at Treasure Island Job Corps Center!

-Lil' June

**From The Beat: We've been weekly witnesses to your struggle, and though you've had your setbacks — you always put yourself back on track. So you need to develop a (weed-free) plan for when you feel overwhelmed by stress, especially on the outs where you're responsible for yourself. Make a plan and follow through, 'cause stress will come while you're in Job Corps, too.**

## What's Beneficial?

### Right Or Wrong

Most folks sell drugs 'cause they provide feelings that Walgreen's and Rite-Aid don't. But folks also buy the drugs 'cause they have nothing better to do.

But in most cases both buyer and dealer benefit from the situation so there is a right and a wrong to the situation but how do you make it beneficial? Supply more drugs.

-Boog Money

**From The Beat: Whether it's buying or selling, why do you think people turn to drugs in the first place? Who do you think is more desperate — the buyer or the seller? What do you think/envision the world would be like if it was drug-free?**

## Talkin' Life

Minds got stronger and souls get weaker  
Your life drop and yo' thoughts go deeper  
Numbers go up then things get cheaper  
Then you realize you was talkin' 'bout yo' lies  
And it didn't get sweeter

Now you doin' time playin' with yo' peter  
Measuring yo' self and you ain't even got one meter  
Swingin' ya draws like you was Derek Jeter  
But you realized it's life and numbers only get cheaper

-Boog Money

**From The Beat: They say the best poetry is the kind that only few people can read into. We don't understand what you mean when you say, "numbers only get cheaper." Can you break down this poem for us a little?**

## Who and How Long

I always sit in my room and wonder who been in here before me (and how long these materials we use been here, too). What crime did they commit, and how long did they have to be in this place?

-Unefarious

**From The Beat: Ever wonder if they managed to change what they'd do, or if just kept on acting like a foo? What about you?**

## Mono's Back

In May, I got caught for a stolo and some hot shhhh, but I got released on home supe' — and now I'm back in this hellhole.

I ain't trippin'. It ain't nothin' to me. I'm in here with all my homies, so it's coo'. I might go to a group home if not Camp. But I want to say what's up to all in the Hall and at Camp.

-Young Mono

**From The Beat: We sure hope that "It ain't nothin' to me," is a mask you wear to cover the pain; 'cause if you really get that comfortable with incarceration — your fate is sealed.**

## My Court Date

What's up! This' me, Young Gato, comin' back at you. Well, I went to court today in Oakland, and they waived time for my trial — so I go back on the twenty-third of this month.

My public pretender is talking about CYA time, if I get committed for my crime. But man, whatever happens, happens — it's that thug life. 'Cause I know if I hit the "Y" that I'm going to max out.

That's what homies do there. It's mandatory for us to put in work, especially if you're from my 'hood. And I'm going to keep it going till I leave this earth. That's just how it is and how it's going to be. No bullshhhh.

I'm just going to hope for the best and prepare for the worst. So, all I can do is leave it in God's hands. Till next time, stay up!

-Young Gato

**From The Beat: We feel you when you explain how "that's just the way it is." And, yeah, those pressures will be there big-time if you go to the Y. They're the same pressures that have you back in the Hall. Someone has to break the mold, and show there's another way to be strong and bold. Why not you? Don't surrender your life to this zoo! Earn your respect and your freedom, too. Don't volunteer to be the system's foo'.**

# I just want to get out of the system and never return.

## Trustworthy Females

Trustworthy females, ain't that a topic? I personally don't believe in a trustworthy female because I think of them the same way they think of us men. I always hear women saying or telling me or other men that we ain't shhhh or we don't respect them enough or they always think we cheating when we aren't around them or just anything to get a conversation going or put us down.

I don't care what no woman say about how much they love you or how they don't cheat or how much they have respect for us. I mean — don't get me wrong, I like all women I don't discriminate. I like them all: black, white, Chinese, Japanese, Cuban, Puerto Rican, and Mexican, but I just don't trust 'em.

-Anthony

**From The Beat: If you can never trust a female then you just might be single for the rest of your life. There is no such thing as a relationship without trust and you have to remember that not all females are the same. You may have had a few bad experiences with women, but don't let that stop you from opening your heart again.**

## To The Beat:

What's crackin'? This the homie Green Eyes! This piece is a response to The Beat Within! Check it out!

First off, I don't need you to feel sorry that I felt disrespected! And I don't know how you came up with that shhh about Latinos killing Latinos and we're using his name (Cesar Chavez) to justify it, because in that piece I wrote, it didn't say shhh like that, and you would never hear me using his name to justify it. So get shhh straight before you write back with some shhh that I didn't even say in my piece! Understand!

And also, before you try to tell me about what Cesar Chavez fought for you need to read my piece because I know what he fought for! And you (The Beat Within) said that you felt disrespected when we say that the two of us are fighting for the same "cause!" Well if you read my piece there is nothing said like that in any kind of way! So stop writing back with all this off the wall shhhh!

I don't know who you mean by "The two of you!" but my "cause" as a Mexican will never be the same as any of the other "causes" you're talking about, so before you try to speak on shhh that I didn't even say, read my shhh in my piece better! Understand!

And you (The Beat Within) said to the "Beat Without" to try and educate me! First off I want to let you know you got me messed up! So before you try to get someone else educated — get yo'self educated on what I'm about, because I'm educated on everything I'm about, from Cesar Chavez to the "cause"! Understand! And the "cause" is something that I would never speak to you, or in your Beat Within, because you're not what I am, and I'd be crossing the line to speak to an outsider on what we about!

So I just want to let you know they could keep their advice to their self because I don't need it, won't take it, and mostly don't want it! Understand!

I'm out.

-Green Eyes

**From The Beat: We apologize again (even though you don't want us to apologize) if we made you feel disrespected or insulted in any way, shape, or form. We want to continue hearing from you because we're curious to know what is this "cause" that you're so passionate about. You know we've been doing this work for a minute and we've seen too many young people who claimed red/north as passionate as you too, you know, down for the cause, and won't see it no other way, eventually finding themselves going down hard, living the CDC gang life on a level four yard, living the Ad. Seg life, the SHU life, dealing with painful prison politics, or, resting in peace. And if that's the gamble you want to take with your life and you see no other way to live your life, then go for it Green Eyes and keep us posted a long the way.**

**You can cut, shoot, stab,  
me with your eyes  
I just need to stop,  
breath and realize**

## Placement

What's up Beat? Well I went to court a week or two ago and I got a placement release to my aunt's house but if her house doesn't fit the placement qualifications then I got to go to a group home but I already know her house is going to fit the qualifications.

So all I'm waiting for now is the placement people to check my aunt's house then I'm out to the house! I'm out.

-Green Eyes

**From The Beat: You have been given a great opportunity and we hope that you don't mess it up. Take this chance and fly with it. What kind of things will you be doing to make sure you don't come back to the Hall? Remember, don't take your freedom for granted!**

## Rozee's Tagging On the Wall

Well, on the topic of "Ghost of Cellies Past" I can tell you this. When I was in a room in Boys' Control, I saw my homie Rozee's tagging on the wall.

That made me think about the times we were kickin' it on the block up in Newark, soakin' on a couple of forties and puffin' on a couple of blunts. Then we'd go click up with some other homeboys and then go looking for trouble.

And when I was in a room in another unit, I was in there with my homeboy from Newark. You've probably read him in The Beat. Lil' Spanky's up at Camp right now.

So me and Spanky, hit up the room so the next people that are in that room, they'll see our shhhh! Well, I'm out t for now.

-Lil' Scooby

**From The Beat: If you don't want to spend the rest of your life going from locked room to locked room, you need to see beyond drinking and smoking and looking for trouble (whatever you want to call it). Get a job. Move on with your life.**



## Pull Yo' Wig Back

From the first time I step foot in this earth ninjas been tryna put me in the dirt. Constantly tryna make me hurt, but shhhh you can't hurt something that been hurt over and over because after you been hurt so many times — what used to hurt — you won't feel.

But as I roll through these streets, all ninjas want to see is me and my ninjas deceased because we live life as we see it day by day. Because at any given moment any ninjas could hit the corner and pull yo' wig back and there's nothing you could do but pray that you pull through yo' problem and see these cold-hearted streets again, but as the bible say we live to die.

-Lil' Molly

**From The Beat: Throughout life, there will always be people that dislike you or try to hate on you. Newsflash — there is nothing you can do about it. People are always gonna go off at the mouth. Now, as far as getting your wig split — how can you make sure that you're not increasing the chances of losing your life?**

## Father Figure

Yes, a father plays a big part in a man's life, but I never had anyone to be a father figure. I have been my father figure — me and my mom so I never had a man to tell me right from wrong and to be truthful.

I've just put God in my life and he is my father figure now.

-Shannon

**From The Beat: Does God play a big role in your day-to-day activity? How do you show appreciation to your mother for being there?**

## One Hour

If I had one hour that I could do differently — it would be the hour that I choose not to go to school, 'cause if I would've went to school the day I got caught — I would've never been in here.

But shhhh always happens and it happens for a reason and sometimes it happens 'cause you stupid but you learn from it. That's what I'm doing — learning from my mistakes and at the same time making this a good experience in life.

But that would be the hour in my life that I would change.

-Lil' Carlos

**From The Beat: Do you regret your choices because you are suffering for your crime by doing time? Or do you regret your choices because someone else is suffering because of you? Have you ever thought about what the person/people you hurt must feel?**

## An Hour To Relive

The one hour I would like to relive would have to be the hour that I first met my girl 'cause she was looking fine as hell and when I saw her — I was like damn, and from that moment I couldn't let her walk away from me so I had to just go and talk to her.

That was the best hour in my life and that would be the hour I would relive.

-Lil' Carlos

**From The Beat: What do you miss the most about your girl? What is your most cherished memory together? How can you make her feel special? What do you like about your lady's personality? Did getting to know her make you feel special? Do you treat her the same way you did before you got to know her?**

## Conducting My Own Life

Stop  
Breath

Breath in slowly

I'm not going to let the devil control me

He makes me wanna slap some females

But I know it's not me and only God would know

There be some fake chicks

Who be talking, out their necks

But knowin' damn well they won't ever hit a lick

But all I can say to you is...

You can cut, shoot, stab, me with your eyes

I just need to stop, breath and realize

That I can't let no chick conduct my life.

-Lawanda

**From The Beat: Lawanda, you need to be the one to conduct your life. There may be some fake chicks out there, fake people period! With these people you may wanna act out violently, but if you want to be the conductor of your life, you need self-control. Patience, that is the way to develop self-control. You can do it. Take charge of your life, and take a deep breath. If it's too hard, seek help/support/more advice.**



## I Feel Like Johnny

I feel like Johnny, but my word to Johnny is, you can hustle good or bad because without an ID card, no one will hire you at the age of fifteen.

So, tell me, how would you get your money? Boy, all I know are two things, hustle and stack your paper. I be from Oakland, California. Two more things that I know, get money or be broke. Me, I ain't going for that because I like having stuff, so you can do what you do best.

Stay up brother. That's it.

-Gb

**From The Beat:** Gb, when you are in a desperate situation it's really hard to know what the right thing to do is. Is survival the most important thing? What do you base your moral decisions on? There are so many questions. We guess the main thing would be to step up and take charge. But, what to do, well, that's up to the individual. What do you think?

## Ghost of Cellie's Past....

That's different. I never thought about the Hall walls like that. About what the next man had done, or been through, that was in my cell. But to be honest, I don't really care as long as I leave an impression here, (a decent one), and make sure to never come back to this hellhole.

-Ashton

**From The Beat:** We're glad we made you think. We don't have all the answers, we don't know all the stories, but there is always something that gets noticed, and something that doesn't. You want to leave an impression here in the Hall, just like the last guy in your room. What do you want to leave behind? What would you want to share with the next occupant of your room?

## The wrong thing in this world would have to be jail

### What's Up Beat?

What's up Beat? I did not get to write last week because I got into some stuff, so I had no pencil, but I am not trippin'. I am trippin' off my case, though.

See, the big thing is, my family is up in Alaska and I don't know what is going to happen to me. See, they might send me to the "Y", but I am wishing for Camp, and another things that's really bothering me is I haven't made a phone call in a minute, so, see, I don't know nothing. I don't even know what to do, so what should I do Beat? Am I going crazy?

-Gypsy George

**From The Beat:** You not going crazy. You may feel like it, but you'll be okay. Just be patient. Focus on what's most important to you. And do what you got to do. You'll be fine. You a smart cat. Keep writing. Ya' know the best way to get out your frustrations is to just get them out. If no one is trying to hear you, your pencil is your weapon; we're listening (or reading).

## I'm Washed

Man, after all that, goin' to court for four months, fo' the dope case and that warrant, they dropped the dope case and brought it back up.

So they tried to get me fo' that, but, I beat it. But they still sendin' me to the Y for a year to eighteen months. But I'm gon' do that and get out like the beast that I am, but worse.

R.I.P. Juju, B-Bo, Criddy, Ant Greedy. See you when I get there.

-Lil' G

**From The Beat:** What does that mean, the beast that you are? What kind of beast are you? Why worse? You have the power to decide who you are. You wanna be a beast, where is that gunna take you? You are in a crappy situation, but you still have control over your attitude. You're smarter than that. Do your time and let that be the end of it. If you decide to let it affect you, in such a negative way, you walk away with a bigger problem than just an eighteen-month sentence.

## What I Do To Keep Me From Going Crazy

I start reading the Bible and praying to God, writing letters, and writing to The Beat, and reading. I though that since I am in here, I might as well get up on my reading and writing skills.

Also, a lot of other things make me stay sane because I am getting to go to Camp, and I get to go home soon. So, I'll finish what I have to say later. I gots' to go.

-Gypsy George

**From The Beat:** Good for you. Might as well use your time wisely. You'll be productive, get smarter, and keep yourself from going crazy. Sounds like you got a great plan!

## God Squad

We just had two older ladies come in here and do a gospel session. I was paying close attention and one of the ladies started preaching. In doing so, she started to become emotional, although I found nothing funny about the situation.

However, someone sitting next to me was laughing hysterically. His laughter caused me to let a slight laugh escape from my mouth. Needless to say, I felt ashamed. I'm a strong believer in God, and words can't describe how stupid I felt. Don't get me wrong. I don't feel like killing myself over something so small, but I guess I was just immature.

-Dominick

**From The Beat:** Sometimes we laugh, no to ridicule others, but because we, ourselves feel uncomfortable. We've all done it. How do you feel about it now? If you believe in God, do you believe everything happens for a reason? If so, find a reason, and learn from it.

## Is There Any Hope?

This life is no joke! I am thinking, "Is there any hope? Is there any way that I might, just might, get out and go to Camp? Or will I be like all these other suckas, and going to the "Y" and end up all damp?"

Man, I feel like taking flight on some fool, but what will that get me but another night alone in the room.

-Gypsy George

**From The Beat:** Frustration is rough. What can you do constructive with all that built up energy. Well, you're making the right decision to not act out on someone else. Do some push-ups. Read a book. Keep busy. That's what will give you your hope. Ya' feel us?

## Hi

I just see you and you see me.

I said "hi," but you could not hear me.

You walked down the hall to your unit.

I wish you would have stopped and said a word to me, but the damn staff would not let that be, so, until we can be out and you on one,

I will be thinking about you.

-T-Maine

**From The Beat:** This is a sweet little note. Hopefully it reaches that special person, until then stay focused on your program.

## When I'm In My Room

I don't think about who was in my room before me. All I think about when I'm in my room is my family and what all my patnas is doing on the outs.

I don't care about who was in this room before me, or anyone in here with me, but my big bra, Dre. All I care about is getting out and trying my best to stay out.

-Lil' Samoa

**From The Beat:** Good, you are focusing on what is important to you. So...? What does it mean to do your best to stay out? How do you plan to do that? What is your best? Is staying out your priority? Or are there going to be conflicting interests? Prepare yourself for the struggles you will encounter before your release and you'll be much better off.



## Right Or Wrong It's God

The only thing that I think is right in this world would have to be religion 'cause with God you can't never go wrong 'cause God is always protecting you.

The wrong thing in this world would have to be jail 'cause when you come to jail you lose all of your freedom. I wish that they would've never invented jails 'cause it's wrong when they take you away from your family and all of the people you care about. But at the same time it's a good experience, but I still think that it's wrong.

-Lil' Carlos

**From The Beat:** What do you think they should do instead of sending you to jail? How can a lesson be learned without incarceration? How has jail been a good experience for you?

## I'm My Own Dad

This is the Byrdman and I'm solo like the eagle. I've been a father figure to myself since my dad died.

-Byrdman

**From The Beat: How has your life and attitude and life changed since you've lost your father? How do you deal with the pain?**

## My Dad The OG

Well, this is Green Eyes about to write a little something so check it out! Well the father figure in my life is my pops he's a OG from my 'hood — he's been there through thick and thin! When it's funk he's ridin' with us to the fullest!

He used to tell me to do the right thing but I never used to listen, but as he went back to the pen and came out to seein' his kids locked up and gangbagin' to the fullest he just accepted it and we became hella close. And he'd always come to the 'hood drink a beer and let the homies know what's up and cut. He'd always tell me what ever I do to make sure I do the right and smart thing!

Other than that my pops just livin' it up with his sons in this life. I am out!

-Green Eyes

**From The Beat: If your father had chosen a different lifestyle, do you think that you would have too? Do you think that you're headed in the same path as your father? Where do you see yourself heading in the next ten years? In the future, do you want your kids to gang bang? Would you just accept it and crack open a cold one with them too?**

## I'm Out

This is gonna be my last writing to The Beat 'cause I am goin' to the Y next week. I have been in the Hall for four months now. I'm going to be doin' like a year and a half to two years, but I have a feeling I might max out my whole four years. I ain't even stressing off shhh.

Though, all I'm really trippin' off of is not being able to see the outs for a while. But it's all good 'cause my girl is gonna be visitin' me every weekend. So to all the homies out there. Just be coo' and do your program so the system don't hold you down. I'll be out on parole sometime soon... hopefully. But I'm out, CYA bound!

-Lil' Ray

**From The Beat: What can you do to make the best of your time in CYA? What can you do so that you don't max out there? How can you utilize all of the resources there so that when you get out — you'll have extra skills under your belt?**

## Bro And Uncle

My father figure in my life was my brother and my uncle. My brother taught me how to hold it down and be strong and my uncle was always there for me and gave me what I needed.

My uncle taught me how to do things right. I got street mentality from my bother and a smart mentality from my uncle, so I'm pretty level headed.

-Lil' Ray

**From The Beat: If you're so level headed — then why are you sitting in the Hall? If you were really street smart — you'd know enough to stay away from them!**

## It took me 17 years to get here

## Right Or Wrong Selling Poison

Some people think it's wrong to sell drugs. Some people think it's wrong and I understand that it's just like selling poison.

Yes, I understand that some people do it to feed their family and their seeds but some just do it for the fame. Yes, I think it is wrong to sell drugs, rob, steal, rape, and murder but it has been going on since the 1800s and it never is going to stop. People get paid for stuff like that.

-Maurice

**From The Beat: What do you think it will take to put a stop to this madness? How can you make sure that you're not involving yourself with things that are dead wrong?**

## He used to tell me to do the right thing but I never used to listen

## Do What You Must

Yes, selling drugs is not wrong but sometimes you have to do what you have to do. Everyone is not able and I was not told selling drugs was wrong and sometimes that is all people know.

Yes, stealing is wrong but sometimes that's all people know and that is how people put food on the table but far as rape that is another thing. That is wrong and people know that it is wrong and that is also a sin and people know that and people don't give a damn.

-Shannon

**From The Beat: Have you ever done anything that you yourself thought was wrong? Did you put yourself in check afterwards? What do you think makes people not give a damn?**

## OG's RIP

It's all good, we holdin' in the pain, we can overcome it, but you OGs will never be forgotten. You all was solid when it was your time to go. When you left — it was pain. Where you all rest — there's peace.

I got much love for you. When we be on the spot you OG's would put us up on game and shhh. Where you homies at let you rest in peace forever homeboys! All that's left is your homies solidness and love that you had on the spot, to let every homie know how solid you all were.

I would engrave it in your tombstone if I could and let everybody know who you all were and still are in my heart and in every other homeboy's heart that knows you! Much love and respect! Rest In Peace: Uncle Tony, OG Flip, Rickey Sr, Gilbert and OG Speedy my bro's dad! Your little homie,

-Green Eyes

**From The Beat: We hope all of your homies and family members are resting in peace. How do you keep their memory alive? What do you miss most about each of the people you mentioned above? What are some of the good memories you share with these people? What have you learned from their deaths?**

## What's Up Beat Within?

It's "Young Ferny" up in this ditch. Guess what is about to happen? I am going home in a week and a half. I can't wait to be back at my house and in the 'hood again. The place I really want to go back to is the spot and where we kick it at, and it never gets dark.

When I get out, I am going to keep it coo' for a min. For that, I am never coming back. You know what? All the new homies I met here told me that if it's my first time here — it ain't going to be my last. I tell them that I really mean that: I'm never coming back. I got a plan and that plan is just for me to know. To be real, I kinda wanted to come here. I don't know why: it's just something that I wanted to try, but to all the homies, I am never coming back.

To my homies, keep your head up, and soon we'll be in your rooms drinking them King Cobras again, hearing you flow again about something dumb about me. Wherever you went, keep it coo', so you only have to do half of your time, and when you get out, there's going to be a phat party, but to every homie in here. Keep doing what your doing, but next time, do it smart, or don't it at all.

By the way: It took me 17 years to get here, and I know you hear that we are never coming back all the time, but you will see. I am out.

-Fernando

**From The Beat: We always hear people say, "I'm gonna be slicker and smarter about my shhh next time." Well guess what — they always come back! There's no such thing as "doing it smart" 'cause bottom line is — you can't beat the law. Something's got to give sooner or later and the laws ain't changing; so it has to be you. You can't keep doing the same shhh and expect different results! It just doesn't work like that! Wake up!**

## The Lord's Prayer

The Lord came with me as I walked through the door. He is working through me. I speak peacefully, calmly, and loving, no matter what others say or do.

The Lord has control over all, no matter what others say or do. The Lord has all the power. Just because it's said doesn't make it done, it doesn't make it true, and it may not happen unless the Lord says so. Jesus died for your sins.

-Danario

**From The Beat: When did you start believing in God? Did you call out to Him in your time of need? Was he there to help you? Do you follow all of God's teachings or just the ones to your liking? Thanks for sharing this prayer with us. Next time try to come from your heart.**

# DISASTERS!



## Confused

I don't know what to think  
I'm confused  
while my heart is feeling used and abused  
How could you do that —  
take her far  
and do something that I wouldn't even wanna know  
about in your car?  
But it's been too long  
and I don't even think I have a place for you  
to feel like you belong.

-Medicine

**From The Beat:** It hurts to be wronged by someone who you've taken into your heart — if there's any solace to be taken, it's that the feelings you're experiencing connect you to literally millions of other people around the world who have gone through the same trauma. Is there anything to be learned from this experience that you can put to use the next time you are in a relationship?

## It's About That Time . . .

A few months I've been hea' and I ain't get a home pass in a minute! I can't wait; I'm sooo anxious to go home and celebrate my birthday wit' my mom! I really miss my ma, and my man — nah, I ain't got a man, I only have a homeboy.

Anyway, I'm missin' my home girl! Alma. Well, I'm goin' on my home pass dis Sunday and it's been a minute since I've been home. I wonder how it'll turn out.

Alright then, I'm a let cha go. Late.

-Lamei

**From The Beat:** We're curious how it turned out as well. What did you and your mom end up doing to celebrate your birthday? What was it like kickin' it with your man — sorry, we mean homeboy — and your home girl? Was there anything that was difficult about being back home?

## Trustless

What's up homies, this is El Creepy guy from Redwood City streets doing some tiempo for the cause / 'hood, getting recommended to CYA. But whatever happens I'm a stay on my toes, keep my head above water and be strong to do my tiempo.

One advice to the homeboys out there watch who you do your dirt with, 'cause there are so-called homies that are trustless. Well to all the homeboys out there doing time stay in your toes and do your time don't let the time do you. And to the homies from el barrio let's keep ourselves above water.

-Creepy

**From The Beat:** Doin' dirt for the 'hood won't keep your head above water; rather, it's a sure way that you'll drown. How are you going to do your time? Are you going to get done by time, repping and collecting time, or are you going to do the time, get yourself an education, and return to the free world ready to stand up on your own and live for a real cause?

## Taking Advantage Of The Game

I don't knock nobody's hustle; if you getting it, get it how you live it. I don't care if it's grindin' long as you getting it rogue, and don't let the game take advantage of you.

If you ain't about that paper then you on something. Where I'm from everybody is trying to make it. It's kind of like a game of Jenga, stacking up high before somebody make a wrong move and knock you all down.

-Warren

**From The Beat:** We don't know too many people who haven't been knocked down by the game. That's the thing about it, as far as we can tell — the game takes advantage of everyone in the end. We're not going to knock your hustle either, 'cept to ask you what good all the grinding is doing you now.

## 1 Wish I Wasn't

I wish I wasn't dedicated to this game like I am. Maybe if I wasn't dedicated to this game, I could change my ways, but I don't know if I am ever gonna change because I'm too deep in this game. But hopefully when I get out I'm gonna change.

-Lil' D

**From The Beat:** Yeah, maybe if you weren't so dedicated, but we'll never know, will we? This is a circular argument, Lil' D, and hope will play little part in your potential for change. Either you're willing to challenge your own dedication or you aren't; either you will show real dedication by changing your ways or you make excuses about your prior dedication commitment to the game.

## Productive

I wish I was out free, doing something productive instead of being dedicated to this game and always messing up. But that's just the way I was raised. But sometimes, I wish I can go back in time and do shhhh all over.

-Rhino

**From The Beat:** There's no going back, but you can use the experience and knowledge you've gained — even what you've learned from the game — to move forward. What will it take to avoid the mess ups, and to start to pull yourself away from this "game" that will only pull you down?

## Get Money

Damn, I keep it real — I'm money hungry. I miss gettin' it and stackin' wit' my home girl, feel me? We be real 'bout ours, go gettas and ain't no broke females that ain't 'bout shhhh. Know what I mean?

So, don't hate, congratulate (ha ha)! Anyway, much love to everyone in Oakland, 'cause dat's where da real money's at, feel me? Be about yours. Do you own thang, I do my own thang . . . get money! It's nothin'. RIP Solo.

-Lamei

**From The Beat:** Speakin' of keepin' it real, where's the money now? Oh, that's right, you're all about gettin' and stackin' on the unit — we've noticed that you come fitted to workshops each and every week. Wait a second . . . no, actually your money does you no good without your freedom, and it seems to us that if you really love money, you'll spend more time worrying about how you can stay free and stack it legally. We're not sayin' money's all bad — it clearly isn't, and it gives an many advantages to those that have it — but the kind of greed for greed's sake that you're talking about here doesn't have any redeeming qualities.

## Desperate

Me and my boy were chillin' in the park waitin' for that phone call to get our high back. Everything was going wrong. My boy was having a mental breakdown. He didn't know who he was. I told him that he was schizophrenic and needed a girl.

When the time came only one of us was able to go. I felt mad that I could not get high. I was desperate so I messed up his chances to get high too. We almost fought.

-Ap

**From The Beat:** This sounds like a truly desperate situation, but we can't understand all of it. Was your boy tripping on drugs, or does he have real, permanent mental problems? What does needing a girl have to do with being schizophrenic? Why is it so important to get high? Do you ever worry that you will do something to your mind that will leave you wondering who you are, like your boy?

## Summertime Lockdown

It's depressing being in the Hall when I can be with my friends and family. It's boring here, especially when there's nothing to do but sit in your room.

-Carl

**From The Beat:** How can you overcome the boredom until you return to the summertime fun? What activities do you think should go on in the Hall so that you're not bored?

## Hell

How could I be so dumb?  
Sometimes I even wanted to run  
The thoughts of him made me cry  
It got to the point to where I wanted to die  
His hand against my face  
Slapping me so hard I would begin to lose taste  
Girls are messy in their own little way  
They're going to talk about you  
Regardless of what you say

-Trus Gurl

**From The Beat:** Getting hit by your boyfriend, even staying with you after he hits you, doesn't make you dumb. It does, however, make you someone who needs to help herself get out of that situation. There are tremendous feelings of confusion that come from knowing we should leave someone who's being abusive but still loving him. Is there anyone you can talk to? Can you find the strength to leave him on your own, or will the support of friends or family help you out?

## Being Tired

I'm tired of opening my eyes looking at these walls knowing I got to wear another man's drawers. I'm tired of doing wrong but to me it seems right.

I really want to change my ways but I'm a rogue. I don't want to be like some ninjas that's half-steppin' because that could get you killed. I learned from my big homie if you going to be something be it to the fullest because a half-stepper will catch a bullet and that's real. I'm tired of ninjas switchin' sides.

Sometime I think about my time and it's nothing compared to some people, so God must be telling me something. I'm going to take advantage one day, but for all my rogues locked up, I hope the best for you and I'll see you on the blade one day.

-Warren

**From The Beat:** What part of doing wrong feels right to you? If you really want to change, then you'll change — as they say, the proof is in the pudding. You criticize others for half-steppin', but you half-step on change. Further, it seems to us that those who stay down have a good chance of catching a bullet, too. Are you going to take advantage of the opportunity you're getting that others don't have, or are you going to let it slip through your hands? The system doesn't care if you were planning to take advantage of your opportunities one day, it just cares that you didn't take advantage soon enough.

**His hand  
against my  
face  
Slapping  
me so hard  
I would  
begin to  
lose taste**



## My Life

When I was born, my mom was high on cocaine. She had to give me up for adoption. I was adopted three weeks later on Halloween day. Ever since then I have been livin' at home.

When I was in preschool I bit some boy's arm. In kindergarten I scratched some girl's arm. Ever since the first grade I have been made fun of.

In the fourth grade I had my first crush. In the fifth grade a boy asked me out. He was my first boyfriend. In the sixth grade I had a crush on my friend.

-Nelly

**From The Beat: We feel the beginning of an autobiography coming through in this piece. Where's the meat on these bones — what was it like living in an adopted family? Do you remember why you bit that boy or scratched that girl? What else happened in grade school? Keep it coming . . .**

## I Wish I Was . . .

I wish I was on the outs right now  
Cop me a couple of bottles somehow  
See, I'm what they call an alcoholic, but I don't  
see that way. An alcoholic spends every cent on  
alcohol, you know I just drink on the weekends.  
When I drink, I drink 'til I blackout. Last time  
I drank doctor said I almost died of alcohol  
poisoning. Now they trying to send me to a  
treatment or rehab. But I ain't tripping, it's nothing  
to a stunna — ain't neva been a runna. You feel me.  
I used to drink every day off six bottles of E and J  
See, then I changed my way to three bottles a day  
See cause of three bottles,  
I'm now doing 365 days.  
Aight y'all, this will be continued next week, 'til  
then I'm out like this — peace.

-Ko'na

**From The Beat: We're not sure who put your idea in your head that the definition of alcoholism involves spending all your money on drink. Independent of that, you go back to sayin' you were still hitting three bottles a day. A near death experience, blackouts — hopefully you'll take advantage of whatever rehab you end up getting sent to. This is serious — we've seen many be taken down by something seemingly as innocent as drinking.**

## Happy Eighteenth Birthday

Happy Birthday  
You're now eighteen  
I know it's your day  
But don't be mean

You're now an adult  
So be careful what you do  
Because being locked up  
Will all be brand new

So do a few tricks  
Maybe a few stunts  
Buy some weed  
And roll a few blunts

Smoke the herb  
As if it's grass  
Take some more hits  
And then you pass

Once you pass  
Light up another  
To five minutes later  
You'll soon discover

You're high as the sky  
But lazy as a slug  
So open a bottle  
And chug chug chug.

-Baby D

**From The Beat: We're confused — you start out by saying how careful the new eighteen year old has to be, and you end by describing someone getting high and drunk. We hope this eighteen year old makes it to nineteen on the outs as well. Oh, yeah — happy eighteenth.**

## You Can

I wish we could fly . . . but we can't.  
People say never say never because you always can  
so believe in the good.  
Never say you can't do anything  
because you always can.

-Nelly

**From The Beat: We're not sure how the first line fits with the message in the rest of this piece. What is it you want to achieve? More importantly, how are you going to go about doing it?**

## Life Story

My whole life I've been messin'  
Wit' the wrong people  
Now I got a hitter squad  
That like to slang keyloads  
High-speed chase in a stolen Regal  
Grand theft auto  
Blowin' stop signs and lights  
Off a bottle

The thiz make me clench my ralo  
But a vest can't stop the hollows  
I got mopped 'til my head felt hollow  
I can't swallow my pain

I'm hurt 'cause my ninj' took shots to the brain  
And somebody squatted off wit' his chain  
Mom's buggin' me for a change  
But at the rate I'm going  
It's gon' remain the same.

-Thinzel Washington

**From The Beat: It's a shame that your mom's words and your boy's death aren't enough for you to check yourself. In this piece, the lines that let us into your heart come when you mention the pain you feel because of your homie's death — everything up 'til then is bravado, hallow and cliché. But when you talk about the pain you feel, you start to get somewhere with this piece. How do you deal with the pain you feel? Do you deal with it differently on the ins than you do on the outs? How can you avoid making your mom feel the ultimate pain, that of watching her son get dragged off to prison, or even buried?**

## Lil' Something On My Mind

I caught a couple cases, so now I'm back at the Hall behind bars  
Surrounded by four white walls  
I tell myself at night to depart from all the haters  
Deep inside I smile and I won't cry later  
The cops broke my wrist but I'm still in the game  
I do it for the cause, I don't do it for the fame  
When I get out I hope my decisions are right  
But I'ma keep striving for mines and keep shining bright

-Kermit

**From The Beat: Well, Kermit, we've heard this song before — down for the cause, for fame, etc. And when we hear it, we can usually predict that we'll see that young man or woman again. If you expect a different result from doing the things that led you here, you'll be staring at four walls again and again. It's shady that the cops broke your wrist, but there are worse things than having your wrist broken. Are you prepared for them?**

## I Wish I Was

I wish I was that man that people looked up to.  
I wish I was a strong man that can make positive choices.  
I wish I got out the game and started to be myself and nobody else than your pork chop.  
I wish I can have respect for others and to have people have respect for who I am and not what I wear or do.  
I wish I was back in school and doing what I need to do,  
getting that GPA that's 3.85 and being that star player on the football team.

I wish I was...

"I wish" is no longer in my vocab. I live a life that is happy and enjoy maintaining my balance, and never let no one take me out my game. Live you' life to fullest, doing what is said up above on the paper. Don't let no one take you down from what you want to do. Only you can make yourself happy if you just take a step forward and see that extra light.

-One Love Young One

**From The Beat: Wishing for change is the beginning of change, but only the beginning. From wishing comes doing. So what will you do when you get out of here to become the man you wish you were?**

## I Wish . . .

I wish I was with my mom. I wish I was at home. I wish I was not in jail. I wish wasn't desperate for money. I wish at home helping my mom take care my sister because she gives my mom a hard time. I wish I could get a job but I can't. I wish I didn't get that girl pregnant. Sometimes you got to do what you got to do. Bye-bye.

-J-Rock

**From The Beat: Unfortunately we had to cut a couple of lines from this piece — they were powerful, but we're afraid that they may add to the troubles you're already facing. There's an element of truth in your conclusion, but we're curious about "what you got to do." Shouldn't doing what you've got to do include being with your family and helping them out? Shouldn't doing what you've got to do include being there for your child that's soon to be born? What's more important than those two things?**

## The Day I Met You

The day I met you, you was pulling over to talk to my homie  
talking about I was cute and that you wanted to be with me

Yeah I ain't gonna lie you was looking real good  
but know that I know you  
I was a fool to be with you

Those lies and saying that you love me wasn't true  
But is something about you that I keep running back to you  
Been together for almost one year

Broke my heart and shed a couple of tears  
I hope what you wrote in the letter is true  
Saying I'm your only baby and that you would neva play me for a fool  
Keep it real and wait for me  
'Cause you my only one for all eternity.

-Chino

**From The Beat: Man, wouldn't it be so much better to be out there to tell this to her directly? Hopefully when you get out this time, the feeling that went into these lines will help motivate you to stay free.**

## Livin' In Hell

Sometimes I wish this was a dream  
 I wish I would wake up after all that I've seen  
 But I guess I have to accept the reality  
 And stay focused without the gangsta mentality  
 'Til I get out, I'll just chill  
 I know how it is and what's da deal  
 So, forget it.  
 I'll just do my time and stay real

-Flaco

**From The Beat:** What terrible things have you seen? Reality can be hideous, but it can also be gorgeous. Is it the gangsta life that has exposed you to the nightmare? How can you get out of the gangsta life? Do you have the strength to do it?

## I Wish...

I wish I was at the house wit' my ninjas,  
 playin' Xbox; wit' my ninjas, playin' ball;  
 wit' my ninjas, postin' and poppin' at  
 some breezies.

-Young Skin

**From The Beat:** If you played video games and ball, most likely you can maintain your freedom, but if you're just postin' on a random street corner, you might just get in trouble. Why do you refer to women as "breezies"? Is it so hard just to call them females or

## One More Try

Night after night  
 Day after day  
 You're in my brain  
 And I feel insane  
 It's like a dream  
 But I feel pain  
 Stuck in this game  
 Nowhere to run  
 Nowhere to hide  
 So, please, Baby Girl  
 Let me give  
 One more try...

-Lil' Speedy

**From The Beat:** Why are you stuck in the game? Why can't you just walk away? Can you give up the game for yourself, as well as for your girl? What does the game get you? Status? A reputation? Cash? Does your girl want you out of the game? Does the game scare her? What will you do without the game? 'Cause you can't play the game forever — you will lose sooner or later.



## Without My Girl

Damn, I wish I was with my girl. She's my one and only, and without her, I would be lonely. I miss her so much, like you can't imagine — her love and all her passion.

I just had to hit the H2O — this is the reason I had to go. Now I'm suffering the consequences for putting the pizzo to my lips, knowing this hella trips.

-Edgar

**From The Beat:** Was it the crystal that got you busted, Edgar? Was it worth it? When you get out, can you forget using it? You're risking a lot, including your girl, if you don't. Do you need a drug program? Can you set one up for yourself while you're in Juvy? Good luck!

## Massive Chicken Burrito

I wish I was at home with my friends, bumping music at my house, going to High Tec Burrito and getting a massive chicken burrito. Or at the Giant's game, cheering for them.

I want to go home and see my family, and spend time with them, and try to not smoke cigarettes and drink beer. I just want to be free and go play my Play Station 2.

-Dylan

**From The Beat:** Sounds good, Dylan. Summer is slipping by and there you are spending it up in Juvy. When you get out, what do you have to stop doing to stay out? Can you stop it? What will you do instead?

## Cell Thoughts

When I'm in my cell, I don't exactly think of who was there before me... and when I do, I think of who might have been there way back in the day... Mostly, though, I think about if I were to kill myself, how I could come back and haunt this facility, so that nobody would want to come back!

-Sad Eyes

**From The Beat:** What else can you do, that's positive, to influence youth in Juvy to stay out? What about doing really well on the outs? So other kids could realize that their lives aren't over just because they're in Juvy? What could you do to prove to others that they can make it, and have huge success? Get great grades in school? Get a fabulous job? A writer? A movie star? Doctor? Lawyer? Actress? What is success on your terms? What is a huge break out winner, by your standards? How will you achieve your dreams? PS, suicide won't make anything better for you!

## I Wish I Was

I wish I was famous and had money to blow and had money to support my family, 'cause the life I'm living now, it really ain't bad, but it ain't good. It could be a whole lot better.

I want to rap or go into the military, so if rapping don't work, there's military, 'cause if I go into the military, my family can get benefits and have money to support themselves. That's all I really want — to just support my people.

-Smurf

**From The Beat:** Do you know that the USA is involved in a lot of wars now, Smurf? Afghanistan, Iraq, Colombia, etc. Are you sure you want to get involved in all that? What are you doing to get your raps produced? Why don't you write some out and give them to The Beat Within to publish? They're copy written if we print them. What other kind of job can you get? Grocery store? Computer operator? Salesman? Tutor to younger kids?

## Stuff I Go Through At Home

A Trialogue Among: Braun, Eli and Tip  
 Cappin' Session

Braun: Ninja, it look like you got hella bald spots in yo' head.

Eli: You got a McDonald's sign on your head.

It's going ba da da da ba. I'm lovin' it.

Tip: Aww! Yo' hair line somethin' I can't explain

A Nike, K Swiss and Reebok sign.

Braun: Eli got his shoes from Payless, on a 75% discount.

Eli: Awww! Why y'all both teamin' up on me?

Tip: 'Cause you look like you need to be on TV

Wit' somebody sayin', "Feed My Child"

Braun: Eli family ride around on bikes.

Eli: Tip, you just ugly.

-Braun, Eli and Tip

**From The Beat:** Does clowning on each other help keep your spirits high in such a negative environment? How can you make the best of your situation without hurting each other's feelings?

## Desperate

I am desperate to get out.

Desperate to see what was life once again.

Desperate to change from wrong to right.

Desperate to do something right for myself and my parents.

-Young Skin

**From The Beat:** What can you do to start making your parents proud? What can you do to make your future better than your past?

**if I go into the  
 military, my  
 family can get  
 benefits and  
 have money  
 to support  
 themselves.**

## Treated Like Dogs

Person 1: Staff

Person 2: kids

Person 1:

Sit, stop, wait, no

OK, line up, you can

Put your hands

Behind your back

That's five points!

Person 2:

What did I do?

Person 1:

No talking!

That's another five points!

Go to your room!

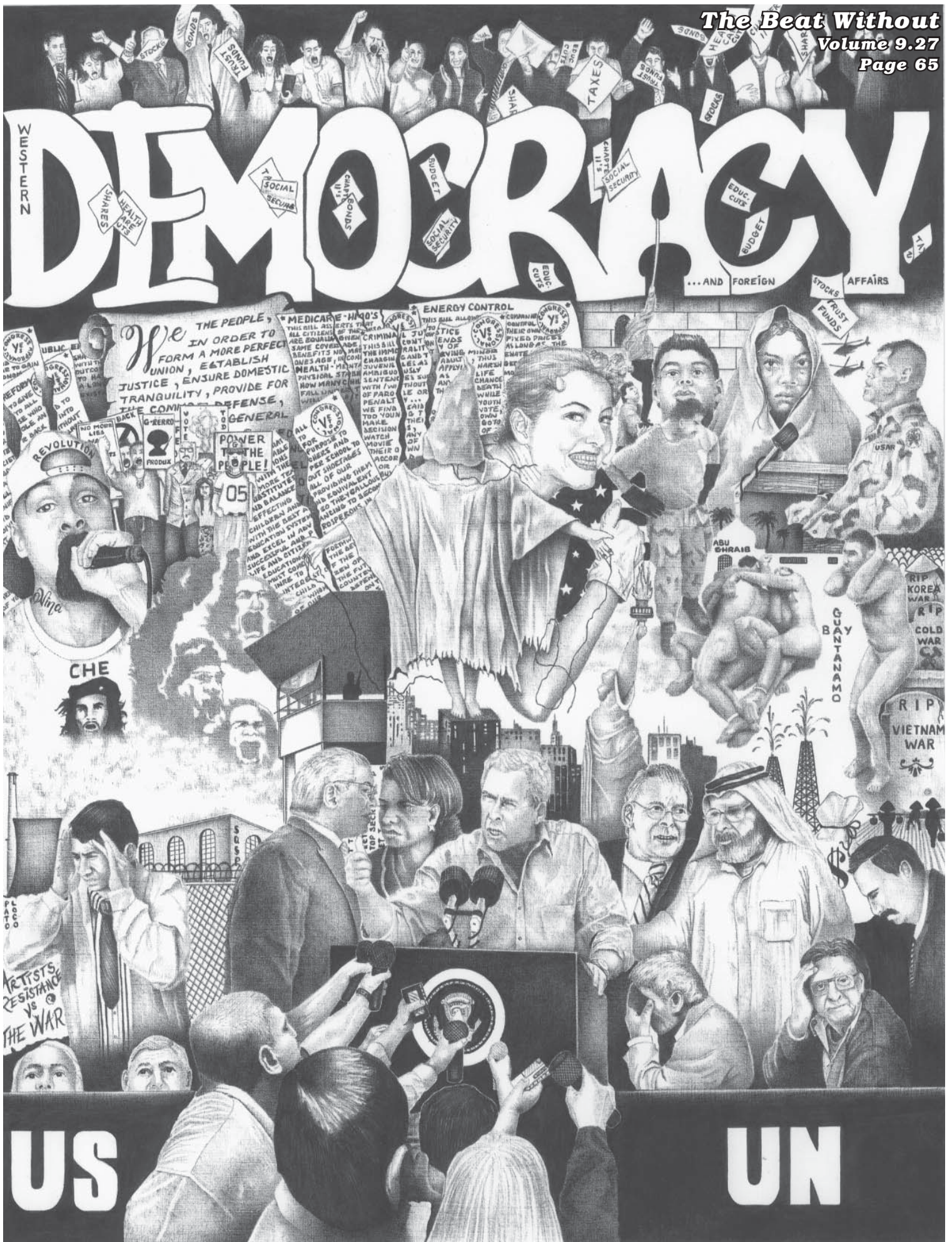
Person 2:

A day in the life of someone in the Hall!

-Forgot To Sign

**From The Beat:** Life in Juvy can be really regimented. Can you just do what the counselors say and let it go? Don't let it get underneath your skin. When you get out — can you remember that you don't like being in the Hall and try your best to not come back? Do any counselors go out of their way to help you, listen to you?







**D BOY** Did we hear the words, work "for free" when you're released D-Boy? Damn, your presence is definitely welcomed into our office upon your parole. We truly appreciate your writings that you have submitted to The BWO these past couple of years. You have been a major player in teaching through the power of the written word. Once upon a time D-Boy was a participant in our weekly workshops in 150 aka Alameda County. Today D-Boy is finishing up his sentence in the CDC. He wrote this piece from the State Prison Correctional Training Facility in Soledad, CA, after getting word that he was transferring prisons. We haven't heard from D-Boy in a minute, but we anticipate a letter soon. This next piece is a very honest response to how he sees many of us Beat readers, as well as how he sees himself.

## I Love U Self

Dear Beat Community,

What is it? Same ol' shhh, different flies, huh? This D-Boy one time again, still in the hole patiently waiting to get my shine on. Now that I got my mind going, I can truly say "I love y'all." Now some of you are like this dude is a J-Cat saying that he loves us, and don't even know us. The reason I can say that is because I love myself and all of you are a reflection of me, as one we are all a reflection on God.

Everything on earth is an essence of God, bad, evil, good, and so on. The Bible says, "he who judges shall be judged the same by God." I can't knock nobody hustle or anything that they do. All I can do is help them when I can give them warning when they're headed for a wreck.

One of our main problems is paying too much attention to the problem of others and not of our own. We would get farther in life quicker and more easier if we take the time we spend putting down, criticizing, and hating on others, to recognize our own disabilities, feel me?

To each his/her own. As the Bible says, "you can't bring to surface the plank in your neighbor's eyes when you have one in your eye." But, some people say they love themselves, but they kill, abuse others, disrespect, etc. If we truly love ourselves it would not be necessary to go out of our ways to destroy the next man or lady. Even if they may have triggered it, a person that is happy within his or herself "recognizes" that the other person is miserable and envies them for the happiness, joy, and peace that they are radiating. With that, the infector has no affect because once you are aware of a problem, it is much more easier to prevent.

I can understand if you are in danger then handle your business. I can't see no other solution in that case, but I don't fight unless I'm under attack because if we act upon words, we are letting the infector control our emotions and they win. We feed into their misery.

Imagine, if you go to a function and somebody is like, "what the hell are you looking at!?" but you got a pistol on you and then you push they wig back and get caught, or vice-versa, they might push yo' wig back. Then what? All of this over a fake lil' kid argument. Was it really worth it?

It's like this; I know some of y'all are some young hittas

out there in them streets, but check this out: If I tell you that you're a mark, what damage did I just do? None. Obviously, you ain't too much of a mark because if you were, I shouldn't even be talking, I should be puttin' hands on you if that's how I feel.

I'm not trying to promote violence or anything, but my mamma told me if I see a punk, slap a punk. Bottom line: If you know what your about, why prove yourself to someone who is unworthy of your time? All that is, is our pride and pride makes you prove yourself 'cause you are proud.

Another thing is ladies stop beating your self up. I know dudes be abusive, but if you are really not the type to get abused, than just leave. It isn't that much "love" in the world. The truth is: you allow people to do to what you like. In order to bear the pain and suffrage and not stand up and leave, you have to enjoy it. You must like for that person to beat you. Actually, if you get beat and say it is more of your fault than the actual assaulter. There's no other way around it in my eyes, but my opinion doesn't mean anything. If you sell your body for a dude, that's your fault. He slid you some game and you bit. Don't hate the pimp, hate the hoe. If there wasn't any prostitutes, pimps would never exist.

Basically, what I'm saying is check yourself. We are at the age in life where that whatever happens to us, we are solely responsible.

This was just a topic I had to get off my chest. I hope I didn't offend anyone because that was not my intentions, whatsoever. As I write this article today, (May 7), which is my birthday, I have just received news that I will be transpacking to Susanville Prison next week. I just got word after I started this article.

I have been here nine months, (in the hole), now. God is great, ain't He? With that, I'm 'bout to end this kite, so I can fly it, so live y'all life, stay strong, stay one step ahead, get further, reach for the stars, get yo' mind right so you can shine right, and "love yo' self." (You can't love anyone else till then). Love you all! And, kill 'em with kindness!

Lastly, I encourage all Beat consumers to feel welcome to challenge me on my words, ask questions, give me advice, or just holla at yo' boy! Oh yeah, I have a few months remaining on my sentence and I hop I am welcome to come put in work at The Beat office, for free!



## GLENN CORNWELL

Glenn Cornwell

has been a faithful Beat contributor for many, many years now, and printing his words are always a pleasure. Glenn is an excellent writer, and we're always impressed and honored when he takes time out from fighting his case and working to support himself, his kids and his grandkids with his writing, to submit a piece from Death Row in San Quentin, CA. We wish him strength and good fortune.

## Enter The Flames

It's not a foregone conclusion that mankind will survive,

In fact, if you think it's okay, you're not really alive

If you think hungry children shouldn't be fed

Trust me my friend, you're already dead.

Think back to a time when you were a kid,

Kinda seems like something you recently did

Today you stand and justify wrong,

But tomorrow believe me, you'll be gone

Got people's minds thinking that others are evil,

While you drop bombs on innocent people

Must be a fool if you think killing's okay

Just wait till you get your fateful day

You think it's okay 'cause no one knew their names,

But you'll see their young faces when you enter the

**Got people's minds thinking  
that others are evil,  
While you drop bombs on  
innocent people**

**ANIS** The Beat welcomes yet another new writer in Anis who drops a series of thoughtful pieces, as he writes "in the name of Allah, the most gracious, the most merciful." Anis, speaks his truths about how he views others in his letter to The Beat. And in his two poems he speaks about the pain of the invisible dads, and the hypocrisy in the USA. Anis writes us from the Monroe Detention Center in Woodland, CA, where he is fighting for his life.

## Dear Beat Within

As-Salaamii Alaikum, (may the peace of Allah be upon you). I want to say hello and thank you for The Beat Within. I am presently incarcerated here at Monroe Detention Center fighting for my life against the "Three Strike Law."

I was introduced to your newsletter here, and it opened my eyes and my heart to share some of my story with my young brothers and sisters in humanity who are suffering the lost of freedom and youth.

Time is something we must cherish. We never know when our time will end. Life should be lived, not wasted, and maybe if they hear where they are headed, they will change directions before it's too late.

I'm forty-six years old and I've given most of my life to this system of destruction, for these places are built for destruction. They are designed to destroy any, and everything, that comes into contact with them: families, lives and self-worth. They are unnatural and anti-human.

I don't want to focus too much on the things I did to get here. I won't glorify negative and destructive behavior. I want to focus on what it takes to stay out of these places. I believe the most important thing is knowledge of self.

It is easy for us to put on a show about the person we want people to see us as. We do all kinds of phony things and we become blind by the facade we build. For us to express ourselves honestly, not lying to ourselves, is very hard without knowledge of self. Our life should always be about self-examination, a peeling away of one's outer self, hit by hit, until the real person emerges, this is a life long job. Without knowledge of self most people become what others say they are, we begin to have more faith in what we imitate than in our true self.

Your newsletter also has started me writing again. I have a couple of pieces I would like to share. But before I end this letter I want to share this with all those who have lost their freedom...

Even in the darkest moments of our lives, light exist if we have the faith to see it. Fear is a poison produced by the mind, and courage is the anecdote stored, always ready, in our soul. In misfortune lies the seeds of triumph or failure, depending on our outlook on life.

if we  
really  
care, then  
why do we  
leave our  
sons and  
daughters

They call it the  
home of the  
brave, but I say  
it's the home of  
the slave.  
The hatred  
I encounter  
everyday in this  
land they call  
the USA

## Hypocrisy

I live in this hypocrisy, oh I mean, democracy.  
Can't you see what this twisted society is doing to me?  
They call it the home of the brave, but I say it's the home of the slave.  
The hatred I encounter everyday in this land they call the USA,  
stands for Under Satan's Authority" is what I say.  
Yeah, they even got enough nerve to have in "God we trust" on the money  
they give us. Shhh, don't make me cuss,  
but I must speak my mind, it's a must.  
I got over four hundred years of seniority, yet they classify me as a minority  
until it comes to sending me to the penitentiary.  
Then, it's all out war on me!

## Dads, If We Really Care

Dads, if we really care, then why do we leave our sons and daughters  
at home, all alone, with no dads to take care of them,  
no dads to protect our children from the cold, hard streets,  
and sometimes we don't leave them with enough food to eat.  
Why dads when we say we really care,  
we need to stop just bumping our gums and be there!  
Stop coming to prison if you really care,  
and stop crying about how the government tries to control your child's life,  
they're talking about taking your parental rights!  
Hell, why are you crying?  
You ain't even trying to be a part of your child's life!  
As I walk these prison yards, I hear my fellow dads saying  
"my son this," "my daughter that,"  
yet you've never even taught your son to swing a baseball bat,  
or have you told your daughter young ladies don't act like that?  
Dads, don't get mad at me, I'm the same, you see,  
but I'm going to state this fact: I'm going to be a man and win my children back.

**H.H. DOMINGUEZ JR.**

H.H. Dominguez Jr. aka Sparky writes to us from Pelican Bay's SHU where he has been for a couple of years now as a validated prisoner. Hector first came to The Beat Within about a year ago now, and has come through on several occasions with some heavy hitting pieces which received a lot of popular response. With his most recent piece here he flows from another angle that really made us here at The Beat appreciate his diverse skills as an up and coming writer. With that said we encourage you to check out his newest flow and keep your eyes peeled for more of Hector in the future. Much respect and love to H.H. Dominguez stay strong and full of determination!

**Twisted**

(Hook)

There's no life without death  
Grace without sin  
God without Evil  
Truth look within

(Verse 1)

Seven digits in a number, who's he gonna call,  
Done burned too many bridges  
This time will he fall?  
Virgin Mary tattooed upon his back  
Needle tracks on his arms  
In his cheeks his sack,

Four corners in his cell got chills time to fix,  
30 cc's of the damndest China white,  
eyes flip,

He starts to shake, foam up at the mouth,  
Alone on his back, his soul gone south  
Count time at eleven, c-o walks by,  
Rigor mortis setting in, no longer is he high  
Just another o-d'd minority down

No one going to the funeral except mama,  
and how did her baby boy get hooked on dope  
At fourteen years old he started with coke  
Which way will he go, heaven or hell?  
It really doesn't matter, Pastor Juan, church bells  
Ring ten times as a crow flies by  
Oh why oh why did the boy have to die?

(Hook)

There's no life without death  
Grace without sin  
God without Evil  
Truth look within

(Verse 2)

The eyes of a baby boy so pure, so clear,  
Domestic violence,  
Single mom feel alone in here,  
She comes with another man home again  
Daughter fourteen years old one night when,  
She was touched, violated, used and abused,  
Told to be quiet,  
It was her that he would choose,  
And that her mother was a drunk

Passed out cold on the floor,

A man has needs she must be the new whore,  
Now nineteen tears old she's pimped out on the streets,  
Selling her body just to make ends meet,  
Not a day goes by and she doesn't wonder why,  
Drugs numbing the pain  
Hoping and wishing to die,  
Survival is a must in this cold ass world,  
Whatever happened to the innocent life of a girl?

(Hook)

There's no life without death  
Grace without sin  
God without evil  
Truth look within

(Repeat hook)

(Verse three)

Twisted dreams of reality, non-fictional stories to tell,  
Some say living on earth is their personal hell,  
Crack babies, dope fiends, and the criminal minds,  
Pimps, hookers, and chesters, it takes a second to find,  
Porn on the internet, the T-V screen,  
Politicians, government, hustle the people and ream,  
Out their soul for power, financial gain,  
Corporate business, twisted laws, lawyers, false  
statements and claims,  
Insurance forced, extortion game, policy named,  
Stereotyped by the race, quick money and fame,  
Only comes in the ghetto through the sports or the rap,  
Drug dealers, gang members, quick to busting a cap,  
Two ways to go, in the ground or in a prison cell,  
Most living short lives, one way ticket to hell  
Not many will miss 'em,  
Orchestrated religion,  
Distorting the real, praying and hoping to heal,  
Real slow, how we know who's speaking the truth,  
Life's about choice, nothing's fool proof,  
Crossroads, you choose which way you will go,  
Keep it real, be honest, we only got one soul

(Hook)

There's no life without death  
Grace without sin  
God without evil  
Truth look within!

**Two ways to go, in the ground  
or in a prison cell,  
Most living short lives, one way ticket to hell  
Not many will miss 'em**



## THE CHOSEN ONE, AZ

This young man, who writes to us from his juvenile detention facility in Mesa, Arizona (and who has appeared in these pages in the past as the Trench Coat Warrior), begins at the bottom but leaves us at the top. His "Road To Failure" is one that too many young people are on, and he hopes to shake a few of his fellow-travelers up with this reflection. From there, he wonders where common respect has gone (sounding like an old man wishing for the "good old days"). And finally, to the inspiring words of Ecclesiastes, "There is a time to cry/And a time to laugh/There is a time to be sad/And a time to dance..."

### Disrespect

This day is a strange one  
I'm so pissed at all the...  
Bleeping disrespect I see  
Towards our staff, peers, and everything we do  
The shhhh that goes on now never went on before  
Why do people put each other down?  
Is it low self-esteem?  
They think they can do it better  
How about they think that everyone they don't like is stupid not capable  
Not worth the time..  
What is it?  
What could it be?  
It's flat out ridiculous  
People need to learn  
It is better to help than hurt  
Try doing something for someone just for the simple fact of doing it  
Try it sometime, maybe it might surprise you about how good it really feels...  
Stop the shhhh  
Try something new  
Instead of putting a person down try to put them up  
It'll amaze not only the one you compliment, but you as well  
Just try it  
What do you got to lose, uh?

### My Road To Failure

The first visions I saw were foggy but I remember it all. A nice Christmas morning with my mom and dad around the tree. Presents all over. Big Tonka Trucks here and there, bright yellow, screaming out, "Play with us! Have fun with us!"

Then jump to a point that I still can't figure out — strapped to a bed yelling out with all my rage, but I could not remember why. Why? Why? Why? I kept asking myself that for years. However, I gave up trying to decipher the reason why.

Another jump to clearer memories. It was one afternoon after coming home from church (go figure), and I wanted to go to the store up the street so I could buy some candy. Though I didn't have any money that never stopped me before. So I waited for my dad to take a nap, then went right for his wallet and grabbed five bucks, and made a dash to the door, then straight to the store.

While there I bought a bunch of candy and little toys, plus I stole an amount of stuff that would amaze even the teenage thieves of that day. When I returned home you could guess what happened next, but know this: it was all verbal.

Well, it continued like that for seven years when I finally took a trip to see my mom in Heintz, Oregon, where I hadn't talked to her in all that time. This was supposed to be my birthday present because I was going to stay there from the first of June until some time after the fourth of July, but it did not turn out that way.

I spent most of my time at my Uncle and Aunt's house being quite entertained with my cousins, actually. Then, the night of my birthday, my cousins asked me if I wanted to hang out with them. So, like a naïve new twelve year old, I went along. Before I knew it, the joint was on my lips and the smoke filling both brain and lungs giving me my first taste of my snow balling life down the hill of success.

I returned home the following week with a newfound hatred for my mom for sending me home one week prior to her Fourth of July week vacation. But I had come home with a new love as well. Mary Jane, pot, bud, the greens, dank, the kinds, hydro, cheeba. The start of a whole new social life was at hand for me. When summer was over I found more people at school my age at the time that smoked buddha than I could've imagined. Toke, toke, toke. That was all that was on my mind twenty-four-seven.

Skip ahead to now, and realize that this was some great fantasy I had, to be able to smoke cheeba the rest of my life and not worry about what I was going to do with my life. Who knew it was going to take me getting in the system to QUIT THE STUFF!

But it didn't. I just kept smoking and smoking, yet I always said I could stop whenever I wanted. Errr, wrong. System or no system, I was careening out of control like a train headed for the bottomless pit.

Now look at me, sitting here writing to you in my self-pity. I wish I could've stopped at the very beginning of it all, before the pot, the visit with my mom and cousins. The root is at the heart of my hatred regret which is... the first time I stole from my dad, the worst thing I've ever done in my entire life.

But remember you can't change your past, but you can learn from it and change your future.

### Scared But Inspired

What shall I do when I leave?  
I don't know  
Do you know what you're going to do?  
I sure as hell don't  
But I did read something that will hit home here in detention. Enjoy:

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8  
There is a time for everything  
And everything on earth has its special season  
There is a time to be born  
And a time to die  
There is a time to plant  
And a time to pull up plants  
There is a time to kill  
And a time to heal  
There is a time to destroy  
And a time to build  
There is a time to cry  
And a time to laugh  
There is a time to be sad  
And a time to dance  
There is a time to throw away stones  
And a time to gather them  
There is a time to hug  
And a time not to hug  
There is a time to look for something  
And a time to stop looking for it  
There is a time to keep things  
And a time to throw them away  
There is a time to tear apart  
And a time to sew together  
There is a time to be silent  
And a time to speak  
There is a time to love  
And a time to hate  
There is a time for war  
And a time for peace.

So if you find these words just as inspiring as I do, then reflect on it in your daily life.



**FLASH**

Look out readers "Flash" D-Ware is back in our pages with his thoughts on how to do time, how he does his time, and how he doesn't allow time to do him. It's a very simple yet interesting piece to say the least. That's not to say doing time is simple, 'cause it's not. What we mean is the steps aren't hard, it's all about keeping busy and consistent, keeping your mind fresh while one prepares for the day they open the gates. Flash writes us from the Salem County Correctional Facility in New Jersey/

**Do The Time, Don't Let It Do You**

There's an old saying that floats around behind these walls. You usually hear the old timers use the term quite a bit on the East Coast: "Do the time, don't let it do you!"

They call me "Flash" and I would like to elaborate on the term. Time is a bad thing, but there's always something positive to gain from it. Always take a bad situation and try to gain something positive from it. The point being, everyday you're in a bad situation behind these walls. The whole thing about doing prison time is "mind over matter," my friends and compadres. Sure it sucks and a lot of y'all are probably reading this and saying, "listen to this cat!"

In any case, for starters, wake-up and thank god for still being alive. In my case for instance, other inmates envy the strict routine I stay with. I start my day out by reading my daily bread. I eat a light breakfast and then workout the majority of the morning until lunch.

My afternoons are spent reading anything from William Shakespeare to a Dean Coontz novel. I switch-up. One day I'll read, one day I'll write.

My evenings are spent in leisure conversation or watching TV.

You need a strict routine. A man who does not stay active both physically and mentally will deteriorate quickly

doing time.

It's a bitch just getting out of bed in the morning sometimes. Brothers and sisters, we must move on with such will and force that nothing can stop us.

I've been in and out of prison since I was fourteen years old. When I heard the handcuffs lock, I said to myself, "this is it Flash!" You know we all say to ourselves "I should of, I could of, I would of." Well, look at it this way, none of us can re-write the past.

We've all hurt others and ourselves when we committed the crimes we're imprisoned for. What do you do? You put it all behind you and move on. That simple.

Prisoners have a way of making something very "simple" into a complicated situation. We stress about things we have no control over. Things like, "did I say the right words at my visit." "Man, I shouldn't of wrote that in my letter!" How come this woman in my life hasn't written or visited! And so on and so on. We stress about the smallest things in prison.

Stay occupied and focused on doing your time. Brothers and sisters, it's as simple as this. Do you wanna come out of prison, stupid, and run down, or would you like to come out a star on top with the knowledge of Albert Einstein? Be cool and pull this from the muscle.



**You need a strict routine. A man who does not stay active both physically and mentally will deteriorate quickly doing time.**

**SILENCIO**

We welcome to our pages Silencio, who drops us these few, yet important, words from Corcoran State Prison. He reiterates what too many find out the hard way, once you find yourself locked up, where are the homies from the hood who are free when you find yourself behind bars? We appreciate his appreciation for The Beat and his thoughtful words to us readers.

**So-Called Homies**

Yeah, so-called homies, where are they at now?

I'll tell you where they are at...

Yeah, they are out there kicking it,  
smoking on some trees, drinking some 40's, and partying with the jainas,  
but yeah, them so-called homies, , don't have the decency  
to take a minute out of their time to sit down and get a pen and paper to write a homie,  
or at least come and visit a homie  
to say, "what's up, how are you doing?"

Nah... Because they don't care about a homie when he's locked-up.

**To The Beat**

With many hopes and much thought that these hopeful thoughts find you in the very best of strong health, sharpest of mentality and care of spirits in the highest level of success and esteemed optimism. As I extend my utmost respects, regards and honors to you all as well. First and foremost I would like to say thank you very much for inviting me into your program and for putting my work in your book.

Much respects to The Beat Within for helping out and leading us onto a positive path. Keep up the good work! With much respect!

**Yeah,  
so-called  
homies,  
where are  
they at now?**

## DAVID SILLER

David was one of our most consistent, insightful Santa Clara County Juvenile Hall Beat participants and writers for years, so we were, of course, saddened, to discover he had been transferred to County Jail where he is being charged as an adult. David always stepped up in our workshops as a speaker, writer, he was truly a leader in our program. We hope David will continue to exercise his brain and be a powerful Beat Without contributor as he has no choice but to march ahead.

### My Days As An Adult

As I woke up in the morning, the first thing that came to my mind was that it was my 18th birthday. My bunkie, a tall, medium weight, bald-headed, white boy named Porter, wished me a Happy Birthday. At this point we got up to receive our breakfast trays. I was met with the usual greetings of good morning and a few happy B-day from my fellow peers. I began a few conversations with the staff that were working on that particular day.

Me and Porter returned to our room. We had our conversation of our usual nothing. As the day proceeded, we got ready for school when all of a sudden our door was popped and Mr. Montgomery came in with a plastic bag and announced that I was headed to County. I stared at him with a puzzled look on my face. I thought that I wasn't going to County. As I packed my stuff into my moving bag, I shared brief talk with Porter. I told him that I'd write.

As I was leaving my house of 18 months, my fellow peers came to give me hugs and say goodbye. I felt a little warmth in my heart to know that in the so-called worst place we have as a nation, there can be so much

friendship and encouragement from so-called criminals. Still, I left feeling a little nervous, not knowing what to expect from this new situation. But still, I had a little laugh to myself thinking of what was going to be said after I left. I knew Mr. Montgomery would probably tell everyone that he knew I was leaving and my boy, Porter, would be laughing at him, telling him that he didn't know and it would go on with Porter making jokes and Mr. M saying that he drove by the school seeing pretty girls or that he has money or something like that. So I walked on feeling a little better.

As I entered my new house, fellow homeboys hit me up, asking me if I had my paperwork. It was a process that I would go through twice. I stayed at County for a full week. There I got to know the process of a real program and cars. A program is set up by the homies to insure our safety. The first thing I was told was that we respect everyone, and that I must almost always be awake. The next thing I learned was that a car is the people you hang with. Cars are separated by race and gang affiliation.

Now I'm in Milpitas and it's cool. The thing that I know is that I must always show respect. One love and respect.



**I felt a little warmth in my heart to know that in the so-called worst place we have as a nation, there can be so much friendship and encouragement from so-called criminals.**

## K-OZ

K-Oz has been gone from the pages of The Beat Without for a minute, but don't think he hasn't been staying in touch by reading The Beat every week, as evidenced by the following piece. He comes straight and hard about a couple of things that bother him about the pieces he's seen of late. K-Oz comes to us from Pelican Bay State Prison, and we hope to hear more from him again soon.

### Excuses

The following piece is intended as a reality check to all those incarcerated. It is my attempt to enlighten them on how to remain true to their ethics and morals, and to tell them they need to stop making excuses for their current predicament behind these walls.

I have noticed that lately every time I open The Beat Within all I see is excuses such as, "the system is unjust," "my PO is trying to do me," "I don't know how that dope got in my car," or my favorite, "I'm innocent." Have any of you thought about how if you didn't place yourself in a position to have your freedom taken — selling dope, robberies, gang banging — maybe you wouldn't be in juvy, CYA, camp or prison?

I've heard every excuse, from claiming poverty to abuse. Yet you knew that it was wrong to commit a crime, so why do you complain when you're locked up and away for so long that everyone has left you for dead? Whose fault is it that you couldn't go to your homie's funeral? Whose fault is it that your girl / wife moved on and left you in the dust?

I was also very disappointed in some articles in The Beat concerning whether it was ever okay to "snitch."

Some of you said you would do it if blamed for something

you did not do, or if child abuse was taking place. Some of you would even "tell" to get out of trouble.

Many of you believe yourselves to be thugs or gangstas, so what part of the game is snitching? Even if someone is telling on you you're not to tell on him, 'cause either way snitching is snitching. You lick your wounds and move on with your head held up high.

My co-defendant rolled over on me and my so-called homie testified against me for \$20 a week until trial. I was worth a sack of dope to him. He told the cops that we had had a falling out, so we weren't really friends anymore, so by him telling (snitching) on me it really wasn't snitching. He rationalized it by saying if you snitch on someone who ain't a friend, it is not snitching. Once more I ask what part of the game is that?

Either way, he has to live with knowing he went to the podium and told. Many people know he did this and don't mess with him. He is known for the snake in the grass he is and will carry the snitch jacket for the rest of his life.

If snitching is a survival tactic for you, then you're in the wrong game. Don't ever lower yourselves to such drastic measures. Have a little more respect for yourself and always keep it real. Like the saying goes, keep it straight gangsta.





**KAZUE** We hope this next writer agrees with the phrase, "better late than never" regarding, getting his work, which follows in *The Beat Within*. We truly apologize and welcome this first time writer, who steps up with great love as he shares a major part of his life with us through poetry, letter, and tragic piece. Unfortunately the piece was for our last writing contest, but as you can see it never made it on time. Never the less, the piece is as powerful as any piece we have received in recent memory. We do hope KAZUE is not a first time flash in the pan, but if he is, we have no one to blame but ourselves. The man has skills and we hope he uses us as an outlet again. KAZUE writes us from Pleasant Valley State Prison in Coalinga , CA.

### *An Excerpt from a Letter*

By way of a friend I was given a copy of *The Beat Within*, and it was a trip because it made me go back to my days in juvenile hall, and I started to remember how people would come in and try to help us see ourselves, so we could better ourselves, and maybe avoid a future of wasted years, and bad choices.

I started to read the poems and a few personalities stood way out, one in particular stood out and motivated me to reach inside and share myself with you readers... Broken Glass, who for one, is a prolific write-ist. Her insight, wants, and needs are alarmingly clear and I was inspired. God willing she will find an opportunity to take advantage of her gift, and build a future, for herself, maybe publish some books?

Anyways, I've enclosed a number of things. I've never seen my stuff put together on a personal page as your magazine is organized. Maybe I'm being selfish, but I'd like to maybe cut out and frame my pieces, so I can

hang it in the next tattoo shop I work in... I'm moving too fast...

I'm in a California State Prison, and this seems to be an ideal way to release my stress. In time maybe you'll get to know me, and a relationship can be formed. The world is vast, and life is too short to waste not to take advantage of an opportunity to meet each other. Thank you very much. Respectfully yours...

Lastly, I am aware there are rules to follow, and things I can and can't say. I plan to respect your rules, and I won't play too far into the gang thing... I'm gonna sign all my works, "Kazue" UTI.UTI is a graffiti crew from Los Angeles. It stands for "Unity-Threatens-Ignorance" I'm proud of this name, and this crew, it's kept me from looking back to my old life for an outlet, and now I've found another outlet... you!

Once again , thank you, and I hope you enjoy my stuff. Now it belongs to you, no strings attached.

One love



### **Duck Sittin'**

(This is dedicated to all the sucka duck rappers out there who think they got skills. I'm about to baby-sit....Or to put it plain and simple, I'm duck-sittin'...').

"Now" as I give it up to the real  
Void of pop and that duckbill  
Just check out the way this ballad  
Is written, dedicated to the Malard  
Big fat duck, never get enough,  
Given up verbals that straight suck  
Tryin' hard to buss yo' best,  
Platapus steelo, tattooed chest.  
Lyrical child in dismay?  
I leave dead ducks where they lay  
Meet my Bow Low-meet your grill  
Check your chin, peepin' out my skill  
You're a coward, you can't hang  
Shake your tail checkin' out my slang  
As I crush your web feet  
Pluckin' put feathers every time we meet.  
Your name's Daffy, mine is Kaz!  
Quacks, your verbals sound like farts  
Give it up smooth, let it go  
Don't you know that ducks can't flow.  
B-Boy Kaz, I'm not quittin'!  
Practical, radical,  
I'm just duck sittin'!  
(Quack-quack!)

**I'm so different, I feel like all I  
have is me....**

**No one else has the ambition I  
have as far as I can see**

### **My Art, Angels and Demons**

The Angels and Demons piece is an "ambigram" and reads the same way right side up, or upside down. This technique is ancient and takes a lot of thought,

Broken Glass

Scattered thoughts, everywhere are thrown.  
I wrote this to let you know you're not alone....  
Just like you, I'm a beautiful Borin King, (Boriqua).  
I'm also half-Samoan and my name is Joaquin.  
My light-brown eyes and my curly black hair is part of the  
reason why people see me, stop and stare.  
I can be around a hundred people and still feel all alone...  
Because the fabric I was cut  
from seems far away to have been thrown.  
No one else I know has seen the things that I've seen....  
But, for some reason, "you" can explain every word "I" mean...  
It's deep, because we're from two worlds far apart...  
I've read through some of your poems and they've really  
touched my heart. See, just like you,  
all I want is to truly just find love....  
To be with someone whose personality fits mine like a glove....  
But how? I'm so different, I feel like all I have is me....  
No one else has the ambition I have as far as I can see.  
So all alone I travel, making choices that might be wrong.  
I was motivated by one of your poems,  
that touched me like a beautiful song.  
Maybe you can write a book, you have the skills you need.  
You create mental pictures with your work.  
Make you pen live, die, or bleed.  
You have a wonderful talent, please don't let it go to waste.  
Your skills stand out from all the rest,  
I should know, I have good taste.  
So I wrote this for you to let you know you're beautiful and  
you're not alone.  
Broken Glass, your thoughts are scattered,  
but your mentality is full-grown.

she started work at 8pm,  
and didn't get home until 4am

**KAZUE (CONT.)**

## Compton

What I've done that I wish I could redo goes back to when I was fourteen years old. You see, I'm from Compton. I came out here from New York when I was eleven. I was born in Yonkers. That's the Bronx. When we moved to Compton, all I wanted to do was break-dance. I was good, real good, and I had plans to be in commercials and maybe even movies, but my brother had other plans. See, I'm also a twin... or at least I was until I turned fifteen. I'll get to that....

See, my bro' was really mesmerized by the gangsters in our neighborhood. He loved the gear, the talk, the homies, the love....Yeah, there was a lot of love. Because our mom and dad got divorced, we moved out to California, so while mom's was busy working, me and my bro' ran the streets....

I met a few guys who were into what I was into: breaking and graffiti and that left my bro' to run with the thugs, ("his crowd"). While I was out learning new styles and "can-control," (that's graf-talk), my bro' was getting high and getting street knowledge....

We'd hurry home before my mom got home. She worked the graveyard shift, so that meant she started work at 8pm, and didn't get home until 4am, sometimes even later, so me and my brother would be out all night: the first to get there and the last to leave....

Anyways, as time went on, I got better at my art work, can-control, and dancing, and my brother earned crazy respect with his homies as a gangster.

He hung-out with the older homies, so he had to be more mature, and sometimes that meant more violent, which wasn't a problem for him, at our age, 14, we're unstoppable....

Anyways, in school me and my bro' had different classes and different friends, so I didn't always know what he was up to. I got good grades, he skipped class. I never showed my mom my good grades because I didn't want my brother to get into trouble. I'm his twin, two of the same, one love!

Sometimes we'd dress the same in school: Cords, Pumas, sweat shirts, and on these days I would be approached by people at school who thought I was him. He started a lot of problems with people because he was actually jumped into the neighborhood and they had his back. That wasn't really my crowd... I was more into my B-Boy scene.

So while I was out at night doing murals on the school's handball courts trying to get fame, he was out with the homies blatin' enemies. Some were at our school, so I'm 14 getting approached by 16 and 17-year-olds about gang shhh. They ain't trying to hear I wasn't down. They just wanted to get down.... So, I'm squabbin', chunkin' 'em every other day with fools I don't even know....

Until one day, I'm about to get jumped in the boys' bathroom. I knew better than to try to use the school restroom, but sometimes when you gotta go, you gotta go... I was on my way out and I tried to just walk on by...But no, I got bombed on, but I'm not ballin' up, I'm throwin' them, but I was outnumbered. The thumpin' must have been loud because people started to come in. I heard one person say, "A fight, they're jumping 'Twin'...." Then I heard gunshots! The whole crowd scattered, everyone is running, even me. The school narcs' are on our asses... But we got away. My brother saved the day... That is until the next day... See, at 14, you got short-range thinking...Like idiots, we went back to the school...We had to... We tried to ditch, but, one day you gotta go back, so by third period we both went back to the school....

For one long hour. I made it through my class...It was lunchtime and we have an open campus, which means we can go off campus and buy stuff from the stores around school, and hang-out in the park. As I'm going off campus, I looked over at the office windows and saw my brother in one of the offices, hand-cuffed, so I ran over to see into the window that I had to jump up just to see into, and my bro' tells me he's going to jail. No one got hurt, but someone snitched and pointed the finger at him for bustin' off caps with a gun....

See, to this day, I don't think they came and got me because I snuck into class right after they did attendance. Anyways, he was in the office alone and waiting on the police. I told him to slide over by the window and lean towards me. He did and I grabbed him. He fell straight down on his shoulder. I heard a crunch! He had broken his collarbone, but he was out in the open, so I scooped him up, and with handcuffs and all, we both ran off campus....

It just so happened the homies were chillin' next to one of another homeboy's car. I knew them, they knew us.... So I yelled "Ay yo! Get my brother out of here yo! He's hurt!" They shut the doors, hit a switch, hopped up, and rolled out!

I, on the other hand, stayed.... And then the cops came.... The narcs pointed to me. The cops drew down and I got gaffed up....

I went to Juvenile Hall, ("Los Padrinos"). I've never been there before, ever. I'm in the dayroom and some fool says, "Ay fool, where are you from?"

I said, "Compton."

He said, "what 'hood?"

I said, "I don't bang. I write."

He wouldn't let it go. He said, "where do you live at in Compton? What streets?"

So I told him the streets. He said, "Oh, that's an off-brand 'hood homie. You an off-brand?"

I said, "Fool, I just told you, I write."

He said, "what do they call you?"

I told him, "I write KAZUE, but no one calls me that, they just call me Twin."

He said, "KAZUE ain't no gang name, but I heard of a 'Twin' from your hood."

I said, "That's probably my brother. He's a gangster."

Man, why did I say that? So now this clown is on me about why I ain't claiming my 'hood, but my twin brother is? We went at it for about an hour until he asked to see my yellow slip with my charges. My charge was dispersing a firearm in a public school....

This clown loses it... "Fool!" He starts yelling. "You are a ranker! If you are not from your hood, what you doing in jail for bustin' off caps in school?"

So I spent another hour telling this fool what happened.... Then he said, "So, what are you going to do? Snitch on your brother or what?..."

My first thought was "hell no!" My second thought, how much time am I looking at?

So the weeks go by. Every weekend I'm in my cell waiting for a visit that never comes. I'm in my window and I can see other guys with their moms and I keep lookin' for mine, but nope, no one comes to visit Joaquin... I shed a few tears, a female staff comes by and sees me.

This woman, Mrs. Cindy, man she was fine. Real light-skinned with green eyes, and body.... She likes me 'cause I'm different. She asked me why I was crying and I told her, so she took me out to use the phone....

On my first phone call, my bro' picks up. He's happy to hear from me. "Where's mom?" I ask.

"Oh, she's with her new boyfriend," he replies.

I said, "what?" "Why doesn't she come see me?"

He says he doesn't know and he tells me he's going back to New York for a while to go stay with my pops.

His collarbone was broke and he was wearing a brace. He thanked me for taking the rap, so now I'm stuck... I can't let my bro' down.

I hung-up the phone and Mrs. Cindy is still there. I thank her and try to leave, but she stopped me and asked me if I was all right. I said, "yeah, just confused."

Then she asked, "what race are you? You look Latino, but you could pass for Hawaiian."

I said, "my mom is Samoan and my dad is Puerto Rican."

She said, "Oh, that explains why you're so handsome. At first I thought you were just Hawaiian and Black...."

I smiled. She hugged me and my stay in Juvenile Hall got a little better... (Smile).

I finally get to the last part of my court phase and they gave me six months in Camp... Six months is a lifetime to a 14 year old....

A few weeks passed and I'm in Camp Miraloma in Lancaster... Still not bangin' the 'hood, still being true to my B-Boy culture... Hip-hop is keeping me cool....

Four months pass by, it's all good. I'm boy-leader, a smack! But I got juice, so the hell with the names....

I got my first phone call home four months into my six-month bid... My brother picks up the phone.

I said, "what are you doing in Cali? I thought you were gonna go to New York."

He said, "I did. I'm going to go back. I just had to come be with mom's through the holidays..."

**KAZUE (CONT.)**

(Turn upside down, what do you see?)



(Turn upside down, what do you see?)

*continued from previous page*

Damn, the holidays. It was November. My birthday was in Feb. on the 2nd. I missed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years, but I was going to be out by my birthday if I kept it cool....

I told my brother about our B-Day and he said he planned to go back to New York for New Years.

New York's New Years is off the hook. Downtown Manhattan is a zoo.

I said to my brother "forget all that! I did this for you, so stay out here for me!" How was I to know this would be the worst thing I ever asked my brother to do!

You see, New York took his mind off the gang seen...He agreed... Oh, why did he agree?...

So, two months later, I'm a little bit thicker than him. I'm more buff, my head is buzz cut Camp-style and his is long. I'm in a pair of house shoes, (black slippers), and a pair of khakis, and a white T-Shirt. I just bought a brand-new pendleton to match my khakis. He's lovin' it! Now I'm thugged-out for real. I've been to jail, the whole nine....

Our birthday comes around. All the homies are in my yard. It's a Bar-B-Q. I'm drinkin' and eatin'. My brother then shows me his new nickel-plated 9MM.

I said, "fool, ain't you learned?"

He said, "Don't trip. The next one is on me. I owe you one. I'll go to jail next time."

I laugh.

I'm 15 now. The homies are having a ball. It's getting late, but it doesn't stop. My yard has turned into the hangout, the dope spot, and the main part of my 'hood.

My mom is never home, so she doesn't even care.

My brother tells me, "Thanks for talking me into staying here for our birthday, bro'...."

Just then, a car drives by and the people inside the car have flags on their faces and guns hangin' out the window. They yell their stupid neighborhoods name and start dumpin'....

I hit the floor and roll under my homies Low-Low....

My brother pulls out his Nine and starts bustin' back. He runs towards the chain-link fence, gets off about three shots, and the car drives away. My brother is stuck hanging on the fence....

On my 15th birthday, my brother died in my front yard because I ask him to stay home for our birthday....

Oh, dear Lord, I wish I could take those words back! I love you Pappi! And I miss you everyday. Love, your twin brother, KAZUE, the West Coast vandal...



**Hey Ma', It's Me!**

You've done some things in the past  
that made me lose respect for you  
Even though you were the very first woman  
I ever gave my heart to....

The very first to kiss me, the very first woman I loved...  
The very first woman to make sure  
that everyday I was hugged....

But as time passed on, some things changed to a degree....  
You started doing things in front of me  
that my young eyes shouldn't see...

Nothing to do with drugs or crime or dough  
Just certain things with other men that little boys  
shouldn't know...

You were supposed to be an example of the woman I  
needed in my life...

The one to show me what to look for when it was time that  
I chose a wife...

Now that I am older, I can't help to think it's true  
That you're the reason why  
I treat women the way that I do...

But I'm over it now and it's time for me to turn the page...  
I'm the one who's in control of my life, not my emotions,  
or my rage...

I want us to be friends again

I forgive you, can you forgive me?

I need you to help me let this go, so I can at least be  
mentally free...

I love you and that's the bottom line

You're my whole world and everything that I got  
Life is too short to let it go to waste and right now I miss  
you a whole lot...

**Angels And Demons**

it's kind of strange to seek advice from folks who  
live inside the jails...

what do you expect to find besides hardship  
and amazing tales...

tails of poverty, struggle, and loneliness  
where in the streets kids look for love  
people talk bad about the way gangs came about,  
but if you think, it started way up above....

in the bible, god had his angels  
and the devil had his demons....  
god kicked the devil up out of his 'hood, (heaven),  
and banished him for all seasons...

not to say it's ok to be in a gang,  
or even to speak about the 'hood...  
you see, i realized that it's just a metaphor and  
without bad,

there is no good....

it's not your friend's fault; it's yours  
you're in control of what you do....  
and don't think i can't hear what i'm saying  
because i'm in jail just like you!

you see, it's strange  
because i feel that advice f  
rom me carries no weight....  
maybe the things i know, or the words i say,  
are being said by me way too late....

who knows? maybe it's fate,  
maybe the beat within has it's reasons...  
to get to know these people  
inside these cells  
and separate the angels from the demons....  
(which one are you?)



## THE POETIC PRISONER

It pains us to see someone we care so much about at such a low point in his life that he sees himself as his worst enemy. But it is the second poem, "If I Didn't Exist," which troubles us the most because we know, if our Poetic Prisoner can get through this painful period in his life, he will recognize himself not as an enemy but as a champion. But to get through this period, he must not indulge the temptation to end his pain by ending his life! "If I Didn't Exist" reminds us of the movie, "It's a Wonderful Life," in which George Bailey, the character played by Jimmy Stewart, decides the world would be a better place if he had never been born. A guardian angel shows him how many people's lives he has affected in a positive way, and how much poorer the world would be without him. That is how we feel about Will Roy, our Poetic Prisoner. We wish his list included the fact that the lives of those who know and love him, including The Beat Within as a whole, and all who read it, would be immeasurably poorer if we had never known this extraordinary poet and human being.

**If I didn't exist,  
I wouldn't have stole my  
wifey's heart.**

### My Worst Enemy

There's only one person in this world  
That I can't stand.  
A little punk ass kid  
Trying to impersonate the image of a man.  
Living life with no plan,  
Thinking luck could get him by.  
And when nobody seems to understand,  
He breaks down and cries.  
He committed a crime and did some time,  
So he thinks he's entitled to his own opinion.  
He's not man enough to face the world,  
So he makes smoking weed his dominion.  
He annoys me with his random thoughts,  
He thinks he knows everything.  
He wants to soar like a bird,  
But spends his time complaining about his severed wings.  
Every time he makes a mistake,  
I have to suffer the consequences.  
He breaks the law,  
And I become the defendant.  
People talk to me about him  
At all hours of the day.  
Not knowing that I really don't care  
What they say.  
Because if it was up to me,  
This person would just roll over and pass away.  
If he keeps making my life miserable,  
Then he doesn't have to stay.  
He knows every one of my weaknesses,  
And he attacks them relentlessly.  
Sooner or later he'll pay  
Because it should be him instead of me.  
He's as good as dead to me,  
There's no hope for his soul.  
He'll be easy to terminate,  
He's too out of control.  
Sometimes he frightens me,  
He does the most idiotic things.  
He can't even support himself,  
He's like a mattress without springs.  
His future kids are doomed,  
His demise is coming soon.  
For he can only find peace  
In an eight by ten concrete room.  
He thinks he can kick up more dust than a broom,  
But he's been soft since the day we met.  
Yet because he knows me so well,  
He's still a dangerous threat.  
The vision is getting clearer.  
His face is getting nearer.  
I hate to see my worst enemy  
Every time I look in the mirror.

### If I Didn't Exist...

If I didn't exist,  
I wouldn't cause my mother so much pain.  
I wouldn't have anything to explain,  
I wouldn't feel like I was going insane.  
If I didn't exist,  
The world would be a better place.  
I'd be one less disgrace,  
God could make better use of my space.  
If I didn't exist,  
I wouldn't feel so hurt.  
I wouldn't anticipate being put beneath the dirt.  
I wouldn't spend time analyzing my self-worth.  
If I didn't exist,  
My brother would lose a bad influence.  
He'd be a straight-A student,  
And wouldn't see me struggle to gain prudence.  
If I didn't exist,  
These burning tears wouldn't fall.  
I wouldn't have an annoying cell phone to call,  
And my heart wouldn't be so damn small.  
If I didn't exist,  
Jail would have never been a part of me.  
I wouldn't be struggling to stay free,  
I wouldn't have to aspire to be everything I wanted to be.  
If I didn't exist,  
Then people wouldn't have to care.  
There'd be no such thing as fair,  
And I wouldn't let people down if I ended up back in there.  
If I didn't exist,  
I wouldn't have stole my wifey's heart.  
She'd be with somebody more smart,  
Who could drive her around and not make her ride BART.  
If I didn't exist,  
The sun would shine a little brighter.  
The weight on my loved ones shoulders would be lighter,  
My ideas wouldn't be as poisonous as venomous spiders.  
If I didn't exist,  
There'd be no thoughts of slit wrists.  
There wouldn't be blunts to hit,  
And I wouldn't have to wish for a death that was quick.  
If I didn't exist,  
My memories wouldn't haunt me.  
People wouldn't exploit me and flaunt me,  
And the police wouldn't want me.  
If I didn't exist,  
I wouldn't have to give a stranger my piss.  
I wouldn't think with my fists,  
And wouldn't have this long ass list.  
If I didn't exist,  
There'd be no primitive side of me to entice.  
I wouldn't have to be so damn nice,  
I wouldn't play with life like a game of dice.  
If I didn't exist,  
So many things would be right.  
I wouldn't care if I was liked.  
And I wouldn't dampen spirits with the things I write.  
Tonight I might  
Give up on the big fight  
Because if I didn't exist,  
I'd have a much better life.

## **SUNFLOWER**

Sunflower sends us another powerful piece about love, but this time about how she let it be destructive rather than productive. Definitely read her self-reflection with an eye towards your own relationships and see if you need to change your course. Sunflower writes from the Valley State Prison for Women in Chowchilla, CA.

**In my search for love, I have suffered heartache, and I blame myself for not realizing the fact I was walking down the wrong path. Or, I did realize it, yet I was too hardheaded to care.**

### **Self-Reflection**

Rather than direct this outward towards society, I choose to make a reflection on my own person. I have gone through so many changes in my life, which I feel have been for the worse, for I have been heading in a downward spiral.

I do not understand how I get myself caught up in the predicaments I get in. I am so absorbed in my own little world that I don't see what's going on around me. And I am blinded by my false reality. I am so disillusioned by thoughts of love and wanting to be loved that I can't see that my behaviors make me susceptible to those that wish to prey upon me. I am such a kind and caring person. I have a big heart. Yet, others take my kindness for weakness.

I had someone in my life that was very important to me (for 3 years). We had our ups and downs, and we loved each other. That's what I wanted, was to be loved. But, I always seem to ruin things. Someone tried to come between us. And, they did. Instead of being secure within myself and being sure of my relationship, I allowed another person to affect me. People thrive off getting a reaction out of someone, which was my mistake. The end result was me losing my first love. We were separated.

I used to be a bad-ass. I had no problem running up on people and standing up for what I believe in, but it seems like when me and my other-half were separated, I lost all my heart to progress and the battle was gone from me. I'd subsist day by day, but my zest and zeal were gone. I felt that I had nothing else to look forward to, no one to look up to, and I had no sense of worth. And, I made the mistake of rebounding into another relationship. But this time it was with someone of a bad character whose sole purpose was to drain me financially, and didn't give a second thought to my feelings. But I was so desperate for love that I clung on to whatever there was to hold on to. I was hurt. My heart was trampled on. But I allowed it for I had a misguided sense of love when it was actually a messed up sense of reality. I was lost in a dream-world that slowly became my nightmare.

In a blink of an eye I lost my first-love, was made a fool by another, lost my identity, and lost my self-respect. Others have steadily tried to give me advice and have tried to steer me in the right direction but their words were landing on deaf ears. I'd listen, but I'd let my heart control my actions when I should have let my head take control of the situation. Others seem to have better judgment than my own for they stand outside the circle with watchful eyes while I'm caught up in the middle.

I've done things I regret, and I've even hurt my loved ones in the process. I was wrong for what I put my family through. My dad's health is bad. Yet, I've neglected him all for the sake of love. My family have been by my side through thick and thin, my dad has made numerous sacrifices for me, and has unfailingly devoted his life to saving me, and his perseverance has kept him from giving up on me even if I seemed to have been unappreciative of his dedication for me. And I shouldn't have taken for granted all he has done for me.

In my search for love, I have suffered heartache, and I blame myself for not realizing the fact I was walking down the wrong path. Or, I did realize it, yet I was too hardheaded to care. I only thought of what I wanted and not of the consequences my stubbornness would cause me. I've hit rock bottom and I need to find a way to climb out of this bottomless pit. I feel like a fool. I realize my mistakes, but a little too late.

Throughout this ordeal, other's true colors have been revealed to me. Friendships come revealed in all disguises. You could think someone is your friend, when they are actually a wolf disguised in sheep's clothing and you wouldn't know it until it was too late. Anyone can turn on you in an instant. The only one you can trust is your own self. I might feel like a fool for all I've been through, but I'm going to walk away with my head held to the sky, and never again will I allow myself to be confused and enamored by love. I'd rather be alone and endure the loneliness than to be miserable and abused. I need to regain my confidence and strengthen my self-esteem. I cannot change my past. I cannot fix my mistakes or undo all the wrongdoings made towards me and by me, but I can learn from this hard lesson. I can direct my love inwards towards myself and out towards my family. And, I don't need anyone else to validate who I am or to assure me of my self-worth. I've made so many unwise choices in my life, but it's time I get myself together and start to make the correct decisions.

I've made this self-reflection of myself. And even though I am unhappy about how my life has turned out or I'm disappointed in myself for the path I have taken, I know I can make things right starting this moment. I must search my heart and open my eyes to what's going on around me and see the person I've become. I am a loving person with a big heart and I'm going to take each stride with confidence. And regardless of how bleak my situation, I will think positively. And I will not settle for less. I love myself. And I love my family. That's what truly matters. That's all the love I need.



## ALFRED SLAUGHTER

Here are a few poems by Alfred Slaughter, who was inspired to send us his writings after reading an issue of The Beat in Soledad Correctional Training Facility in Soledad, CA. He really seems to capture life in cell in "If These Walls Could Speak." It has taken us a minute to publish his work, but we hope that won't discourage him from writing again.

### Let My People Go

In the year of our Lord, 2004  
A true and correct date  
The state prisons are full of people  
Burstin' loose at the seams of the gates!

As I stood on hallowed ground  
Painting these word pictures of the scene  
I wished it all was a nightmare, or  
Just a ridiculous dream.

There were gangsters and dealers,  
There were petty thieves,  
The innocent and the guilty  
Christ was there with freedom keys

Most of these are kids  
I said to myself  
Not cans of tuna or sardines  
Piled high on a warehouse shelf.

Somebody's father, brother  
Somebody's dearly beloved son  
Where did they get those drugs alcohol and guns?  
Did a video teach them violence was fun?

I swallowed twice to clear my throat,  
This was no cruise on the love boat  
Stuck between a rock and a hard place  
What a heavy ball and chain to tote!

This is crazy, I thought as I wrote  
Shackles and chains back on God's folk.  
Would the sentence be different my pencil stroked  
If my brothers and sisters were not under Satan's yoke.

Tears swelled in my eyes,  
I had to stop writing and pray:  
"O Lord, Let love and compassion,  
Let them be the order of the day.  
You said in times of trouble  
You would send a friend  
Rescue us like they servant Daniel  
Whom they threw in the Lion's den, Amen."

The moral of this story  
Gives the church something to do  
Remember those in prison  
As if one of us were you . . .

**Remember those  
in prison  
As if one of us  
were you . . .**

**They would  
explain that their  
occupants  
Know the meaning  
of life and death  
For they live and  
die every day  
Like ghosts who  
find no rest**

### If These Walls Could Speak

If these walls could speak  
They would tell dear friends  
About the trials and tribulations  
Of imprisoned women and men  
They would let you know that time  
Has a two-edged blade  
Which cut dreams to pieces  
And punctures hopes that fade  
They would reveal to the world  
The secrets of cold nights  
A time when accused souls  
Undress in truth's warm light  
They would explain that their occupants  
Know the meaning of life and death  
For they live and die every day  
Like ghosts who find no rest  
They have deciphered the language  
Of a trillion heartbeats  
And would spell out long-lost love stories  
That only time could defeat  
They would repeat powerful prayers  
Whispered in conversations with God  
And the words of those who petition Satan  
Thinking hell is where they trod  
They would advise you that the psyches  
Of some prowl like caged beasts  
Bent on raging, anger growling  
No liberty, no peace  
They would admit that their residents  
Know the meaning of freedom well  
One said she was a crack in the wall  
Wide enough to trail  
If these walls could speak  
They would say to all mankind  
That no one of you are innocent  
No matter how small the crime.



**JE-NO** Once a weekly writer out of Santa Clara County Juvenile Hall's max unit, Je-no has kept up with the writing by sending us pieces from his placement at Glen Mills School in Pennsylvania. In the letter accompanying this piece, Je-no said, "I got something to tell the world but I'm not getting a chance because I'm closed in... I just hope people out there be understandin' what I be tryin' to tell them." We're guessin' that we're not the only people who feel Je-no's flows, both the rhymes and the knowledge that he spits. Much props to you Je-no for keeping up the writing, and we look forward to continuing to publish your pieces as long as you keep 'em coming our way.

### **Dangerous Road**

Fred-G rest in peace  
God bless the streets  
fa testin' me  
I learned a lesson from the beef  
that's why I'm the best to speak  
Mama I apologize  
for the days I made ya cry  
on the block all night just tryin' to survive  
But in my memories  
I envision my enemies  
puttin' contracts on my head to finish me  
The reason why?  
Rumors and bad choices  
in my sleep I hear sad voices  
How can I change my style of livin'?  
That's like seein' a smile in prison  
I'm hopin' that I'm forgiven  
you could neva understand my condition  
politicians is the only thing that the block is missin'  
got crooked cops, gunshots, and oppositions  
seein' by brothers down dog is not my mission  
The 'hood got me trippin'  
can't copy me I'm copy-written  
my mama said "Please son, just stop the pitchin'"  
mama's youngest son hit the block because I did not have a pot  
to piss in  
or a window to throw it out of  
On a cloudy day I pushed and shoved wit' older thugs  
warm hugs  
all I got was tough love  
I'm at the end zone, just got myself over the pylon  
as a kid I neva had a shoulder to cry on  
start tightenin' my grip like a python  
Cops watch me  
I feel they eyes on me  
I came in this world alone so I expect myself to die lonely  
Untouchable

just wasn't my time  
can't leave yet, I'm just a couple steps from my prime  
I hope y'all get the message  
how a young man comin' up can go from the bus to a Lexus  
what next is  
I'm a cut that short — it ain't my style to boast  
so take a deep look in the 'hood and realize who yo' folks

(chorus)  
I ain't got nowhere to go  
but I'm still lost on this dangerous road  
I'm still stuck in dis state of mind  
but still I rise 'til the end of time  
  
Caught in the system  
which is causin' my loved ones to end up victims  
Anybody listenin'?  
Nobody isn't  
they just feel the rhythm  
I wasn't born wit' this wisdom  
I just got it from my lessons learned  
keep my head up when I pray so I could neva meet wit' the devil's  
terms  
2Pac's death spread like germs so he earned the spot to be the  
greatest  
if you hate it  
that mean you ain't enough to face it  
But me, I'm just beginning my journey  
my soul started burnin' when I seen my bro' on that gurney  
y'all could learn from me  
but y'all don't choose to  
just admit it —  
I don't spit what you used to  
so either love me or hate me, that's up to you  
Just get off this dangerous road  
my composure hectic  
I'm just tryin' to maintain it

(chorus 2x)

**LIL' SPANKS** After tasting the sunshine of the free world for a minute, Lil' Spanks has found himself back in the bitter darkness — his path has taken him from Trinity-Anza, to Santa Clara County Jail, and now to Sacramento County Jail. Throughout his journey, Lil' Spanks has written a diary of sorts, in verse, to The Beat — sometimes frightening, often enlightening pieces of the life of a gangster and the life of an inmate. As he puts it in the piece below, he's back for "Another Round."

### **Another Round**

In this city of violence  
all you hear is police sirens  
Every night and day  
homicide detectives tryin' to solve another case  
victims in every which way  
fatal casualties of the gunplay  
While  
these vatos tried runnin' game on me  
I recognized their plot  
I ain't no amateur to this!  
So it was brought  
to a quick stop  
Why you vatos wanna try me?  
Them punk-ass moves  
don't even try to run that by me  
Maybe once I was blind to the facts  
a bunch of phony crooked homies  
went and stabbed me in the back

and all love was lost  
Soy como soy (I am how I am) whether you like it or not  
the youngest but slickest  
to ever smash for the block  
straight actin' vicious and I'll be a hog  
But regardless of all that  
these county walls always welcome me back  
Damn!  
In this ring again —  
here we go for another round  
only this time I'm in a different town  
So I gots to keep my head up and keep it sav  
and tell the judge,  
"The court must always balance the rights  
of a defendant and one placed in false light  
if the plaintiff presents no question of fact  
to dismiss is the only acceptable act."  
Lil' Spanks and I'm out  
One love—  
stay strong and true to yourself.

**DORALYS** Once again, we have a new writer out of York Correctional Institute in Connecticut — yep, all the way across the country. YCI has a tradition of writing programs — the powerful PBS program “What I Want My Words To Do To You” profiled a series of writing workshops facilitated by playwright and author Eve Ensler and featuring maximum security inmates at YCI. The Beat has also made considerable inroads at YCI, and in this issue we’re proud to bring you first-time writer Doralys. She shares a slice of her life in the pieces below, and we look forward to hearing more from her again soon.

**I cry so much that the only  
thing I have left  
are tears of blood.**

### Nyasia And Isaiah

I am sorry I'm not there to hold you, show you what life is all about, kiss you, caress you, and tell you everything will be alright. I know you will be alright 'cause mami will hold you within her heart.

Nyasia, mami will never forget your last smile, the last kiss. I see you in my sleep every night. Isaiah, I know they took you away so fast. I remember that last day, New Year's Day 2004, 4:00pm. I looked in your eyes and told you I love you. I know you safe with my mom, but always remember that I love you. I love you forever.

I Love You  
I see you  
I hear you  
I hold you  
You're The Beat in my heart  
Without you I can't live  
I love you  
I love you  
I love you  
I love you  
What more could I say?

### Life Ain't Perfect

Dear Beat Within,

I'm goin' to start by saying my name is Doralys, aka Dimples. I been in YCI for six months. This shhh is no game.

When I came here I was eight months pregnant with a baby boy. That's the worst thing that could ever happen to anyone. I don't wish this — not even on my worst enemies.

I am only 18, about to be 19 on July 3. I got two beautiful kids that I miss so much. Sometime I cry 'cause it hurts to be apart from your loved ones. My mom tries her best to be here for me and I thank her for that. They're the reason I breathe.

Sometimes I say to myself why should I live — all I go through is pain. I cry so much that the only thing I have left are tears of blood. But why should I wish to die? Even though I am here, my family needs me.

Life is not perfect. Maybe this is a sign from God to change my life, 'cause the game of life is not what's up. I could still be a thug and live a happy life, you just need to know how to play the game and it will be alright.

I don't know when I am goin' home, but I know I'm the angel that will never fall 'cause my pride will keep me alive.

### PAUL E. JONES, SR.

It is our honor to give space in our pages to this new writer/poet in Paul E. Jones, Sr., who delivers his work from the California Department of Corrections in San Diego, CA. We truly appreciate the letter and the powerful poem, “Forgive Me For The Pain,” which he originally composed in 2001. We do hope to receive more poems from this thoughtful poet, who is truly eager to touch lives in a positive way.

### Forgive Me For The Pain

Growing-up;  
Surrounded by crime,  
What one witnesses,  
Stays in one's mind.

Knives and guns;  
The criminal insane,  
A choice was made,  
Forgive me for the pain.

Time has arranged;  
Clearance of the mind,  
Time will explain,  
Why a man commits a crime.

People are people;  
As the sky is still blue,  
The one who knew it all,  
Didn't have a clue.

In a world of forgiveness;  
A place full of shame,  
To those who were hurt,  
Forgive me for the pain.

### Greetings

I am writing you all on behalf of The Beat program concerning prisoners new and old. My name is Paul Jones, and I would like to be apart of your program. I not only want to be apart of it by getting your paper, but I want to share one of my many poems!

I spend many hours as well as days “tying” to find another way to give back to society, in one form or another, and my way is through my writing, my poetry.

I look forward to becoming a part of The Beat! Enjoy the poem and thank you for reaching out to us, for us! Respectfully...

**Time has arranged;  
Clearance of the mind,  
Time will explain,  
Why a man commits  
a crime.**

*Every weekend I'm in my cell waiting for a visit that never comes. I'm in my window and I can see other guys with their moms and I keep lookin' for mine, but nope, no one comes to visit.*

*check out the rest of Kazue's BWO piece on page 72*